

IPHIGENIA,

A NOVEL,

IN THREE VOLUMES.

No Fate my vow'd Affection shall divide —
From thee, Heroic Youth ! Be wholly mine !
Take full Possession ! All my Soul is thine !
One Faith, one Fame, one Fate shall both attend ;
My Life's Companion, and my Bosom Friend !

DRYD. VIRG.

VOL. I.

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INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS

TO THE

P U B L I C.

TO solicit the honour of your patronage, and generous indulgence, for the following pages, is an impulse I cannot resist ; conscious how essential the latter will be, to enable the eye of criticism to make allowance for the defects it may possibly discover.

Although prompted by a natural taste to this application of my time and thoughts, I make no boast, like many competitors, for
a public

INTRODUCTION.

public favour, that I write for mere amusement only ; on the contrary, I blush not to avow, that when I began this work, it was in the hope that it may contribute to cheer the gloom of adversity, by which I am now enveloped, and be productive of some entertainment to a liberal and enlightened community ; in which hope, if I am so fortunate as to be successful, I may again be encouraged to enrol myself a candidate for fame, and, on some future day, aspire to lay before you an effort more deserving approbation ; to be deemed worthy of which, will ever expand, with sincere and lively gratitude, the heart of

Your most obedient,

and devoted humble servant,

A FEMALE WRITER.

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IPHIGENIA.

LETTER I.

WHEN shall I cease to deplore my absence from all that are dear to my soul, or recover strength of mind sufficient, to trace, minutely, the circumstances productive of that separation I so deeply regret? No more must I revisit Arran-Vale! Never again, perhaps, shall I listen to the language of my Isabella's heart, nor admire and imitate the many excellencies of the noble-minded Ethbert.

My last letter was meant to convey a relation of the principal events which led to

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B

this

this regretted exile ; but I fear my mind was ill-qualified for the task imposed by my wishes, nor can I now attempt to renew a subject, to the discussion of which my spirits are yet unequal.

The halcyon days I was so grateful for, are suddenly disappeared ! I look around in vain for those blessings I lately enjoyed, but all are vanished ! My future prospects wear the most gloomy form, and I incessantly mourn my hapless destiny.

Perhaps, even now the exalted youth, who lately honored me with his esteem, his confidence, his friendship, renounces all future acquaintance with me. Perhaps, you, whose generous condescension raised me far above what I else could have aspired to, you, who have made me equal with yourself, the sister of your choice, the partner of your thoughts, you too, my Isabella, may be induced to withdraw your regard from one, so unworthy in the general sense, of being stiled your friend ;

friend ; and the sweetness, the truth, and liberality of your nature, overpowered, or, at least, suppressed, by the clamours of prejudice, you may disclaim, and abandon to misery, the humble and unhappy Iphigenia.

Born with strong affections, and tremblingly alive to all the claims of social life, sorrow early marked me for her own ; and every sentiment, every desire and emotion of my soul, have been perpetually counteracted, or destroyed, by some unfortunate event, some sad vicissitude. Fondly attached to those, who, in any way contributed towards my welfare and happiness, my every comfort centered in their approving smile : Upon them I might truly be said to depend for all that endeared my being ; and their displeasure rendered existence to me insupportable. Soon did misfortune deprive me of my first protectors, whom, with tears, you oft have heard me mention. Others, less endearing, succeeded ; but still I discovered some amiable trait to engage my affection, or

command my gratitude, and my heart again paid its ardent tribute. But, again torn away, unsuccessfully I sought an object whom my sick heart could love and confide in, until received, a poor and wretched wanderer, under that roof where first I beheld you, my daily, and not unpleasing task of reading to, and writing for my ever dear and honored benefactress, was charmingly diversified by being permitted to accompany your leisure hours, to share your studies, and attend your walks; and past sources of sadness were soon forgotten in the blessing and distinction of your friendship: But, how short the duration of that bliss? The union of sentiment was interrupted by unmerited suspicion. The most lively gratitude, and unimpassioned attachment, which looked no farther than the delightful intercourse of minds congenial with my own, was construed into a base design to engage in a clandestine love the heart of my benefactor's amiable and only son, and seduce him into an unworthy alliance. Ah! little did they
know

know the soul of your Iphigenia! they would else have been convinced that a wish so repugnant to their happiness and interest, never found a place in my bosom; that the charming Ethbert is exalted far above my humble hopes—that his esteem was next to yours, my best treasure, my highest ambition! but that a thought beyond it never crossed my mind. How has this lamented error blasted every prospect of tranquil happiness, which I had so fondly indulged in the cheering hope of being permitted to pass serenely through life, under the protection of their friendship, and in the unmolested enjoyment of your society? But uncertain the possession of all sublunary good. Banned from all that attach me to earth, and render me of value in my own estimation, and condemned in a foreign land to eat the bitter bread of dependance more painful and precarious than any I have hitherto experienced, I waft back many a tear fraught sigh to the dear scene from whence I am exiled;

B 3

while

while mournful views open before me, and presages of future ill agonize my mind.

Those gifts, for which I was once valued and beloved, are now become sources of humiliation and disquiet; — those sentiments which secured your regard, how frequently are they mistaken or misconstrued by the unfeeling and malevolent? while the consciousness of my abject state weighs heavily upon my heart, and renders me more keenly sensible of every wound; for, assuredly, the state of any wretch, whose mind conforms to his destiny, is enviable, compared with mine, whose spirit soars indignant over its hapless lot, encounters nought but disappointed wishes, and finds a stab to its repose in every occurrence of life.

When I sympathize in sorrow which I cannot alleviate, how exquisitely painful my sensations! When, in some moment of ardor, I utter a sentiment not understood, how severe the disappointment—how unconquerable the disgust!

disgust! Ah! my lovely friend, it is you who have conspired to destroy me! You have taught me a refinement worthy of yourself, but ill adapted to my humble state. Delicacy and sensibility are the sport of vulgar minds—the objects of their derision and contempt. Strangers to these delightful sensations, they despise them in others, and persecute them without remorse, when they chance to unfold themselves in an unfortunate being, who ranks inferior in the gifts of fortune, and is compelled to look up to them for the support of a wretched existence. “Disguise thyself as thou wilt, still slavery,” says a celebrated writer, “still thou art a bitter draught; and though thousands in all ages have been made to drink of thee, thou art no less bitter on that account.” My feelings bear testimony to the truth of this sentiment; for where is the distinction between slavery and dependance? Trust me, you, whom I am still encouraged to style my Isabella,

“The noblest blood in all the land’s abashed

“Having no herald but pale poverty.”

Well then may I be humbled in the dust,
who claim no gentle ties of blood, nor even
know my origin. In vain my bosom pants
to relieve the weary sufferer, penury ties my
hands, illiberality ridicules my emotions!
Torn from the arms of friendship, in vain I
seek another kindred mind.—The blessings
to which I aspire elude my too eager pur-
suit—sadness hovers around my steps, and I
am enveloped by prospects of increasing
gloom! — Adieu, most tenderly; the only
hope that cheers my drooping spirits is, that
you will long and affectionately remember,

Your gratefully attached,

IPHIGENIA.

LETTER

LETTER II.

ALL nature wears a cloudy aspect; when the heart is ill at ease, and her brightest scenes are overshadowed by the disposition that prevails within ourselves.

In this smiling region, where creation displays her best beauties, and the seasons pour their abundance around me, I view the enchanting landscape with apathy, and tintured by the sombre shades that envelope my mind, I find it a cheerless blank.

The charms of the universe are dead to me, without the participation of some congenial mind. Lonely and wretched, I wander through scenes to others replete with gratification of the most elevated sort; but which I find only dreary voids, since the friend of my heart no longer blesses me

B 5

with.

with her presence, enlivens and exalts me by her converse; nor the noble Ethbert, partner of our thoughts, companion of our hours, improver of our sentiments, and heightener of our innocent pleasures, again can cheer me with his benignant and approving smile, and inspire me with a laudable emulation to copy the perfections of mind by which he is distinguished. Estranged from you and him, the fair book of universal nature unfolds its wonders, and lavishes its blessings in vain. I retrace those happy hours which can no more return; and while I sadly reflect upon the severity of my fate, torrents of tears fall, on recollecting that pure unmixed bliss which we tasted in each others society; my spirit droops beneath the frowns of fortune, and the keen pangs which wounded sensibility sustains; and I lament, perhaps, impiously, that heaven has made me what I am.

“ With all the spirit

“ Aspiring thoughts and elegant desires

“ That fill the happiest.—Ah! rather why

“ Didst thou not form me fordid as my fate?”

Yet,

Yet, tell me, do I not err in thus repining against the awards of him to whom I am indebted for such valuable blessings? even the blessing of your friendship, and that of Ethbert! and the power of attaining and preserving your affection and esteem! Forgive me, then, thou First Great Cause! from whom I derive my being, and all that enhances its worth! Forgive my murmurings! Forgive my presumption, and teach me "the noble uses of adversity."

A secret accuser oft starts up, and chides my discontent; its reproofs carry conviction to my heart, and I regret the error without being able to amend it; for our feelings are involuntary, and no more to be changed or disposed in exact obedience to the will, than the form of our persons, or the features of the face: They are all bestowed, and ordered by a wisdom superior to our comprehension; and if to our best we follow his dictates, and faithfully endeavor to honor him by the exercise of his gifts, who shall dare to condemn.

damn us. The lot of some is to suffer—such, I fear, is mine; but Him, who for some wise reasons has given me that portion, will not desert me, because, while I am a poor imperfect mortal, I feel as such.

The rigid and unfeeling may arraign me of ingratitude, when I declare,

“ There’s not a wretch that lives on common charity

“ But’s happier than me !”

Am I not provided with food and raiment ? they will argue—exempt from many heavy evils under which millions groan ?—possessed of youth, health, and innumerable other benefits ? True, and for all these I am grateful. But there are social blessings, refined pleasures, as essential to the health and well-being of some minds, as food and raiment are to that of the body—intellectual delights, to be found only in the active exercise of useful virtue, the pure intercourse of agreeing tempers, and unison of sentiments
and

and manners, enjoyments, of which, perhaps, these phlegmatic reasoners, who are most ready to pronounce sentence on the young, and ardent, may ever remain in ignorance.

The croud that accompanied us hither are now dispersed, an event which has relieved my spirits from an insupportable oppression ; for I found it difficult to bear a part in the grimace, and yield obedience to incessant folly and dissimulation. Indeed, I am sensible I performed my task but ill, for these are scenes in which I am by no means calculated to shine. Most of our visitors seemed to despise or pity me, and I believe my sensations toward them were nearly similar.

My present protectors are but ill adapted for the enjoyment of solitude, which is, with them, the result of circumstances, not choice. You request a delineation of their characters, their manners, and other particulars, of
which

which the late perturbation of my mind have rendered me incapable ; but, in obedience to your wishes, I will now attempt.

Monſieur D'Avenueux, the maſter of this manſion, is, to do him juſtice, far ſuperior to the generality with whom I have converſed ſince I left England. His character improves upon me every hour, and he is certainly as handſome, learned, and highly accompliſhed a chevalier, as ever his country produced. His lady, I believe I have already informed you, is a countrywoman of our own, but highly frenchified ; by which I mean, that ſhe has adopted all the follies of that volatile nation, but is intirely deſtitute of their many agreeable and amiable traits. After this proof of her diſcriminating powers, you will readily decide upon a part of her character ; but be the deficiencies of nature ever treated with lenity, I deſpiſe not the meaneſs of her underſtanding, but I abhor the baſeneſs and illiberality of her heart. Low artifice, ſuſpicion, ill-nature, and cruelty, are
her

her characteristics; depraved in morals herself, she believes all others the same, and treats those in an inferior station with the most unfeeling arrogance. A stranger to every amiable sensation, she exults over the wretched, and refuses even the cold cup, and bitter morsel of intreated charity to the fainting suppliant. The fame of her immense fortune induced Monsieur D'Aveneux to marry her, as a means to relieve himself from some heavy pecuniary embarrassments, in which the levities of his youth had involved him. But the lasting enthrallment on which he thus rashly ventured, soon filled him with repentance, which was aggravated by finding that his bride's fortune was not equal to his expectations, nor the large demands upon it; and after residing two years at Paris, engaged in an unceasing series of fashionable pursuits, they were compelled by necessity to retire to this chateau, where they have ever since generally resided, only making occasional excursions to the different provinces and towns contiguous to their abode, during

during the last of which chance introduced them to the acquaintance of my late kind, and still dear and respected benefactors. They had lived in habits of strict intimacy with the parents of Madame D'Avenueux, and in compliance with their warm sollicitation, accompanied them with many others higher, where, as I have long since imperfectly related, I first experienced that cruel and unjust change in the behaviour of my noble patrons. You know the sad conclusion, and in what manner our separation ensued. Fond of every novelty, Madame D'Avenueux evinced a great partiality for me, and often wished for such a friend and companion in her retirement; this was a sufficient introduction to effect their wish. I was recommended to Madame D'Avenueux with many encomiums, being previously informed that the resolution of parting with me was immoveable. M. D'Avenueux declared himself highly gratified on the acquisition, as he was pleased to term it, of my society, while Ethbert was a silent but not unmoved witness of this unlooked for

for event. It was doomed that we should part. Ah! my friend, such a parting! they would scarcely permit us to utter an adieu! Mistaken, groundless rigor! How had either of us merited a conduct so severe? Had we ever transgressed the strictest rules of duty or propriety, the sentence had been just! Could Ethbert stoop beneath his birth and rank, or I forget my humility and gratitude, I would have owned the punishment too light; but heaven and you can and will witness for me.

They are now, I hear, at Rome; that dear family, by whom I was so lately beloved, once blest with their warmest approbation, but at last converted into an object of suspicion, terror and disgust, though guiltless, a bosom serpent to sting their peace, an invidious spoiler of their domestic happiness: But of the motives or suspicions of his parents, Ethbert, perhaps, was ignorant. I believe they were never expressed to him, and, if so, may they ever remain unknown
to

to him. Far be it from me to disturb his repose. You will, I am assured, acknowledge the propriety of this sentiment, and avoid any confidence that may wound a heart so truly good and generous. Be my letters sacred to you alone; destroy not the peace of your amiable friend and relation by any unnecessary participation of my sorrows; to you only I confide them—to you I pour out my heart and all its emotions; but when you again are pressed to Ethbert's pure and faithful bosom, when you again taste the blessing of his society, and enjoy the soft intercourse of divinest friendship, tell him Iphigenia is content—is happy. That moment, when he again will fold you in his arms, will soon arrive—it cannot be far distant—their return will not be much longer delayed: Arran-Vale will then again display a picture of happiness as perfect as can exist in this world. Adieu; may the best gifts of heaven await you both, is the prayer of your

IPHIGENIA.

LETTER III.

MY disquietudes accumulate ; wherever I go I become the involuntary disturber of domestic concord. First I planted discontent between parent and child ; now have I broken the bands of connubial serenity, and fixed disgust and suspicion in the bosoms of those to whom I look up for the means of life ! Hapless destiny ! Must I, whose most ardent ambition, whose highest bliss is to communicate happiness to others, be perpetually rendered the bane of social peace ? Such appears the hard decree which the inexorable fates have pronounced, and who can avert their rigorous sentence ?

Discord and sorrow attend me. A transient gleam of happiness is quickly succeeded by the dark clouds of heart-felt anguish ; and my mind, by being so keenly sensible of the
value

value of blessings lost, is more deeply wounded by present evils.

Mean and groundless jealousy is a striking feature in the character of Madame D'Avenoux; this unamiable trait I have long marked with concern, and am now its devoted victim. The conversation of Monsieur, at once entertaining and rational, afforded me some satisfaction, in lieu of many unpleasing circumstances, and I indulged myself in the innocent pleasure it offered me; unsuspicious of consequences to be regretted. His talents for music and poetry are equal even to those of Ethbert. You know my enthusiastic attachment to these arts, where heaven-born genius fires the soul, guides the pen of taste, and strikes the chords of harmony. These I found admirably united, and my judgment paid them their due tribute of applause. My soul was often melted by the heavenly sounds; they recalled to my memory the hours we had passed together, and tears of tender recollection oft fell from my

my eyes. I wept the loss of you and Ethbert, from whom I first imbibed this refinement, which endeared us to each other ; but now destroys my repose, and is a dagger in my heart. The effusions of guiltless sympathy were judged to arise from a criminal attachment ! The base suspicion was at first unobserved by me ; but at length it unveiled itself too clearly to be mistaken. I shuddered ! I would have flown from the injurious error ! But whither ? Who will receive or shield me from wrongs which each moment accumulate, and are now become insupportable ? The image of guilt once started is not easily expelled ; its baleful influence spreads like a contagion. Chagrined by the insinuations of his lady, M. D'Aveneux at first resented, but now justifies the wrong. His conduct, at first so irreproachable, is now as much the reverse ; he is become in reality all he was before believed ; his eyes and tongue wound me with the language of insult ; he dares to affront me by the declaration of a passion, I hope unfelt, I believe unthought of

of before the suspicion of it wounded his mind, and, perhaps, suggested ideas that would otherwise never have existed. But, whether my opinion on this point is well founded or not, I am the present victim of a criminal passion, and a vindictive fury, of a misguided husband, and a resentful wife.

Heaven! thou knowest my soul starts at the shadow of guilt! shall I then be condemned to listen to its impious language? to be the slave of its tyranny—the unoffending martyr of its blind rage! Wilt thou not rescue me from a slavery so abhorred, and open some abode of peace? My mind is a dismal scene of desolation! How am I insulted, equally by those who think me criminal, and those who know me innocent? And who will defend a wretched wanderer like me from the machinations of cruelty and injustice? The passing moments teem with increasing ills.—Ah! my Isabella, who will extricate me from my embarrassments? or
5 vindicate

vindicate the injured peace and fame of your gratefully attached

IPHIGENIA.

L E T T E R IV.

WH Y have you betrayed me, Isabella ? Did I not caution ? Did I not conjure ? and yet you have deceived my trust ! Yet, let me not wound your affectionate heart, or misconstrue its generous impulse. You have betrayed me to your cousin ; but, while I condemn the step, I believe, yes I am convinced, that it originated from the warmth of your regard, and the share you claim in all my distresses ; and, although I highly disapprove and regret this part of your conduct, I admire and love the motive from which it arose. You are wrong, my Isabella—materially—perhaps fatally wrong. Read what I am about to transcribe from the
original

original before me, and you will be as forcibly convinced as I am, of your error.

FROM ETHBERT.

“ Insensible to the voice of pleasure, the claims of duty, or even the mild reproaches of neglected friendship, time has flown unheeded by, and a death-like sadness taken possession of my soul, since these once happy glades have lost their fairest best inhabitant.

Why should I say more to you, who can be no stranger to the emotions of my heart ? Yet the melancholy truth hovers perpetually around me, and my pen involuntarily traces the language it inspires. Iphigenia—the amiable Iphigenia—my friend—my companion—my more than sister—is no longer the pride and boast of Arran-Vale ! Deserted by you, its beauties no longer charm ; but the hours pass heavily by in gloomy recollection of happiness, which, perhaps, can never return. I trace your footsteps through each romantic

romantic haunt, where accompanied by you, I listened to the truths of virtue and religion, and sighed to attain such qualities as might have procured the blessing to which I aspired. Pardon me, adorable Iphigenia ! but when I review your virtues—your accomplishments, and innumerable graces, my bosom glows with sensations which all the force of reason is insufficient to subdue. A similarity of sentiment and manners was ripened by the hand of solitude into what I fondly believed an union of hearts, equally pure, tender, and animated. When first my charmed eyes met the soft and penetrating glance of yours, they seemed to greet a kindred soul, and that moment gave birth to an attachment which now admits neither of increase nor cure.

Often have you heard me dwell delighted on the circumstances that marked our first interview, when, as I was rescuing a trembling fawn from its pursuers, my respected parents led you toward me. The little creature lay panting at my feet ; but on your approach

approach it flew to you, as if there assured of protection : You took it in your arms—you cherished it in your bosom, and I preserved and cherished it long for your sake. I resolved that no rude hand should invade the life of a being, that had been the means of revealing to me the heavenly disposition of my Iphigenia. What have I dared to express, most lovely maid ! Pardon my presumption, and judge not too severely of a step, perhaps reprehensible, certainly repugnant to the will of those that gave me life, and by whose means I enjoy all that with you might render it a blessing inestimable : But what is life, and all the world calls good, without your participation ? The lavish gifts of fortune are tasteless ; it is you alone can give them value. Until deprived of your society, I knew not how dear you were to my soul ; and now the conviction of your worth serves only to embitter my days. I contemplate your excellence, your superiority of mind, gentleness of temper, and enchanting manners, those shining ornaments of a form angelic, where
all

all the graces revel, and I aspire to call you by a still more endearing name than friend. My ambitious wishes look up with a faint ray of hope to an union necessary to my future peace and welfare; but which, if incompatible with your happiness and sentiments, will mark with wretchedness my future life. This is a truth I can no longer conceal; without Iphigenia, existence is henceforth a burthen, and you will surely forbear to condemn if you cannot approve.

Permit me to add, if ever I claimed a tender interest in your exalted mind, ah! suppress not the generous impulse in compliance with the rigid mandate of prudential motives, or, more properly speaking, of sordid considerations! The worth that gold imparts is base indeed—compared with your perfections. Let bond-slaves be bartered for that precious, yet destructive metal, I scorn the infamous traffic, and only sigh for the sweet communion of an according mind, a mind, whose ruling principles, whose every

C 2

sentiment.

sentiment is congenial with my own ; such as I found in you, and wish to make mine by the most sacred and endearing of all ties. Let not false refinement find a place in your thoughts, nor disgrace your pen ; you are much superior to all common place ideas.—My parents are convinced of your worth ; their reason must approve my choice—the clamor of prejudice will soon subside—and we shall all be happy. Must what are generally esteemed the favors of Providence be converted into a curse, instead of becoming a blessing ? Shall my rank and expectations be rendered the means of planting incurable anguish in my heart, and destroying my best, my brightest hopes ? Forbid it, most adored Iphigenia ! on you alone it depends. Be generous, and if your heart can own me for its partner, pronounce my happiness, and we shall convince the world how far our bliss exceeds what wealth or vain distinction can impart.

“ What

“ What is fortune to the wish of love ?

“ A miserable bankrupt ! Oh ! ’tis poor,

“ ’Tis scanty all—whate’er we can bestow ;—

“ The wealth of kings is wretchedness and want,”

Your heart, I think, as well as mine, will warmly subscribe to the truth and propriety of this sentiment ; and let me add a hope, that it will be actuated by the same emotions, and forbear to devote the ardor of a fond and faithful passion a sacrifice to error ; but if I am blest by your preference, disdain with me all vulgar obstacles, and resolve to be happy. Perhaps this is the white moment of our lives, and if we suffer it to pass by unimproved, it will elude our pursuit for ever. A gleam of hope illumines my mind. I retrace past scenes, when your approbation created an elysium around me, and the most delightful and cheering presages occupy my mind : But if illusions have misled me, if love and vanity have combined to picture images that never existed —forgive me—

C 3

pronounce

pronounce my doom—and I will offend no more.

My only wish is, to make your happiness equal to your merit—to snatch you from the grasp of cold unfeeling apathy—to rescue the being I adore next heaven, from the adversities of fortune; this forms the first ambition of my soul; if I aspire too high, you have the power to subdue me to your wish, and are incapable of abusing that power. You acknowledge yourself unhappy—how blest shall I esteem myself if selected to give a brighter aspect to your fate! Your answer will decide mine.”

IPHIGENIA

IN CONTINUATION.

A new world seems opened to me! My senses are scarcely equal to the rapid flow of mingled emotions that overwhelms my heart! The specious garb of friendship which love assumed

assumed to approach me was successful. — Under that form I discovered not his real character until convinced by absence, I now find myself the victim of an attachment as unfortunate as it is involuntary, and, I fear, permanent. Long was I ignorant of the real state of my heart, and now the veil is removed, I must strive to commit the fatal truth to oblivion, and for ever conceal it from him whom most it concerns. Honor and gratitude require this sacrifice, and love, with all its powerful eloquence, must plead in vain : Yet, surely, I may, uncensured, indulge a secret joy ! a virtuous pride, on finding the first affections of my soul thus amply repaid ; these are sensations I find it impossible to conquer, attended as they are by hopeless sorrow, when I reflect upon our inequality, and the just yet severe restraints which the obligations I owe necessarily impose. — Never will I voluntarily merit the stigma already annexed to my name. — Ethbert, I renounce thee, and with thee each hope of earthly bliss ! I will be wretch-

ed, rather than base ; insensible to the voice of generous preference, rather than the claims of duty and gratitude. Never shall the worthy possessor of my heart transgress the nice rules of filial piety through his blind attachment to me ; never will I allure him from the paths of strictest rectitude : No, I love him with too sincere, too disinterested a passion. His fame, his honor, and happiness, are far dearer than my own ; and, although now we meet no more, he is ever present with me. No rigor, however severe, can expel him from my mind ; no, my friend, that is a task to which I own my utmost fortitude unequal ; his image will, I fear, alone engross my heart ; it is there engraved too indelibly for any effort of mine to efface, and I doat upon what is destroying me. Methinks, such is the infatuation of that subduing passion, that I would not, were it possible, love him less. My attachment to him and to you is all that endears me to life, and reconciles me to the rest of my species. For your sakes I am still a philanthropist.

You

You will, I think, regret with me your cousin's avowal of a passion so long and properly concealed, so necessary to be suppressed, and which would, perhaps, have been conquered on his part, had he never known from you the particulars of my present situation—had not the ardor and solicitude of your friendship discovered what from him I wished to hide, and made him acquainted with the discontent and anguish to which I am a prey. The regretted consequence of that rash step, will, I am sure, guard you against a similar indiscretion, and whisper caution where the peace of two so dear to your heart is concerned. Should he discover the state of my mind, how would it fan the unhappy flame already kindled in his bosom! and how fatal the probable result! My determinations on this subject are assuredly unalterable; we meet no more in this life but by the consent of his parents, while in my power to avoid it. I have informed him of my final resolve in a short letter, which I send by the same post with this. My fond weak

heart indulged itself for the last time. I bathed that letter with my tears. May they be the last that fall on the same occasion.

I have disavowed any sentiment beyond the cold limits of friendship, and most perfect esteem: I have acknowledged a gratitude, a sisterly affection, that can cease but with my being; but I have declined all future correspondence with him. This you will probably think too severe; but my judgment applauds its propriety, and I hope to act consistently with the restraints it imposes.

Adieu! Your letters are the only happiness I taste, or can hope for at present.

IPHIGENIA.

LETTER V.

MY situation here is now become irksome beyond all endurance, and I purpose an escape from the horrors of jealousy and insult, though uncertain whither to direct my future steps.

I have been assailed by such professions as would make you shudder were I to relate them more minutely ; but it is sufficient that I inform you, my ears are perpetually wounded by the avowal of a criminal love, and my heart torn by the murmurings and accusations of an enraged wife, whose discontent is too well founded, and the long threatening storm is at length burst on me their unoffending devoted victim.

What is there in me, Isabella, to encourage such detested, such impious advances, or justify the suspicion of so shameless an offence? A social monster, to enter the sacred recess of connubial alliance, and tear asunder those holy bands that unite husband and wife! Am I believed that monster? Can I be the object of passions so injurious to my peace and fame? If I could accuse myself of levity, I would stand condemned; but my mind has been too deeply engrossed by gloomy images since my residence here to admit of necessary cheerfulness, much less to allow of excessive gaiety: Yet M. D'Avenueux has obstinately persisted in his unjustifiable conduct ever since I wrote you last, my resentment and intreaties that he would better know himself and me, seemed only to add to his indiscretion; in vain I studied to avoid his insults—in vain I remonstrated with his infatuation—it only increased my cause of complaint.

His

His lady marked the progress of his criminal passion with indignation against me, whom she ought to exculpate from the charge of censure; but folly is ever unjust: I am deemed the aggressor, and treated as such. What a scene of sufferings have I encountered! Banished the social board by a cruel, vengeful woman, I confined myself for many days within my chamber to avoid her malice, and the more injurious affronts of her husband; but hither he pursued me, regardless of every consideration, until overpowered by chagrin, my spirits intirely forsook me, I yielded to the anguish of my heart, and a stranger either to food or rest, for many days and nights, I was seized by a severe indisposition, from which I am not yet recovered. Solitude and peace are the only favors I besought, and I have not now beheld either of my persecutors these three days. Ethbert's letter was brought me this morning by Madame D'Avenueux's female attendant, with a proof of condescension from that lady to which I have not lately
been

been accustomed; a wish for the re-establishment of my health. Had this letter fallen into the hands of Monsieur, probably I should never have received it; for when I find a person capable of pursuing a criminal indulgence in defiance of the laws of honor and humanity; from the moment of that conviction I pronounce them slaves to vice, and equal to the extremest degree of baseness.

Surely, love is of all passions the most pure and exalted; but how degrading those that frequently usurp its name, and slander its gentle and just attributes!

I meditate a speedy escape from hence, but it is yet an undigested plan. I had lately a letter from a young English gentleman, who inherits the possessions of a distant relation, a native of this country, and resides not far from hence, declaratory of a tender preference in my favor, and making me an offer of his hand. He is an amiable and deserving

deserving character; and, although I could not accept the honor he designed me, his friendship and services, which he assured me would ever be at my command, may be highly useful at this important crisis, when ruin and wretchedness seem to pursue me, and cruelest suspicion and slander haunt my steps.

Farewell, my dearest Isabella, with the result of my present hopes you shall ere long be informed. How sad and dreary the prospect, when the feeling mind looks around unprotected and comfortless! When devoid of an asylum, the thoughts of the weary sufferer wander through the universe, unknowing where to fix, or whither to fly for safety!

Adieu!

IPHIGENIA.

L E T T E R VI.

PARDON me for having accused you unjustly. I am now convinced, not only by your own assurances, but from another testimony, not less clear and incontestible, that it was not from you your cousin obtained the relation of my distresses, which have occasioned in all our bosoms such painful sensations. You were blameless, my Isabella, and faithful to your trust: Ethbert stood in no need of any intelligence from you; the mystery is now explained.

The attendant of Madame D'Aveneux, a young and amiable parisian, was bribed to be a spy upon my actions, and those of my protectors; at least they who assumed that name, and faithfully transmitted to Ethbert a minute narrative of every particular of my
late

late sufferings. This young woman, as much from the impulse of her own feelings as in compliance with her promise, obeyed the injunctions she had received, and neglected no opportunity of alleviating my chagrin by every assiduity in her power. My heart confessed a lively gratitude toward this kind girl for all her attentions. Alas! I had no friend but Jannette: She wept for my illness and misfortunes, and I as often expressed my sense of her attachment. "Jannette," said I to her one day as she sat by my bedside, "I have observed in you a mind susceptible of the best emotions—a warm and feeling heart."

Jannette looked her acknowledgements, and dropped a tear of sensibility. "You sympathize with me, Jannette," I continued; "indeed, you are my only comforter." The affectionate heart of Jannette was overpowered; she clasped my hands, but was too much moved to speak.—"Would you serve me?" I said; "Would you relieve me

me if you could, Jannette?" — "Mon Dieu!" she eagerly exclaimed, astonished that the regard she had evinced for me could admit of such a question. — "Mon Dieu! Madame!" she repeated. — "I understand you," I said, smiling: "I ought to have known your heart too well to make such an inquiry; but forgive me." — "Pardonner moi, Madame!" exclaimed Jannette, with increased agitation and quickness, while the tears still stood in her eyes, and a deep glow suffused her face — "Pardonner moi."

Her look and manner was highly impressive; I strongly felt all they were meant to convey—that the chagrin she had found it impossible to conceal, on my questioning her attachment, made it more necessary for her to solicit my pardon—that she feared she was presumptuous in imagining that she could for a moment soften my affliction, or promote my happiness; but that if in any sense, enabled to be useful to me, it would afford her infinite pleasure. I paused a moment,
when

when determined to place my confidence in this affectionate being, I drew from my pocket a few lines I had just pen'd to the gentleman mentioned in my last, describing the treatment I had experienced from Monsieur D'Aveneux, and intreating the exertion of his proffered friendship to effect my wished return to England.—“ This, if you will forward,” said I, shewing Jannette the superscription :—I had not power to conclude the sentence.—Jannette burst into an agony of tears—wrung her hands, and continued many moments in such violent emotions, that she was incapable either of hearing or replying to my interrogatories. At length she inquired, “ would I, indeed, marry Monsieur Arlingcourt ?” Nothing was certainly farther from my intention ; but so greatly was my curiosity awakened by this inquiry, so feelingly made, that, without giving Jannette a direct answer, I requested to know what could have suggested such an idea to her, and, if well founded, why it should occasion her so much distress ? Jannette left me for a few moments, saying,

saying, she would soon return with an explanation of her behaviour. When she came to me again, she held a small packet of letters in her hand. Astonishment seized me as I took it from her, on tracing the well-known characters of Ethbert! But my surprise was soon succeeded by more tender sensations: I was the subject of these epistles, which consisted in importuning and conjuring her to be attentive to me, and fail not to inform him of every circumstance in which I am interested, to transmit him an exact account of any unfavorable change that might occur in my situation, to watch the state of my health and spirits, and give him a minute detail of each particular, promising a liberal reward to her secrecy and fidelity. Jannette had been obedient to all his injunctions, in every point but this discovery, which arose from her knowledge of Mr. Arlingcourt's professed attachment to me, of which she was informed by the servant who brought me his letters, and who was the only person who even guessed at the preference by which
he

he distinguished me, and believing, from the circumstances of my writing to him, that my recent sufferings had inclined me to favor his suit, and yield my consent to the union he sighed for, her knowledge of Ethbert's generous love, and the deep and severe regret which she imagined such an event must occasion him, has thus affected Jannette's heart, and baffled all power of concealment: She viewed Ethbert in the light his merits claim, and so great is the genuine sympathy of her mind, that she participated in the grief which she felt assured he would experience for my becoming the wife of another. Her joy was equally lively, as the concern she had before evinced, when I assured her of her error, and that nothing was farther from my thoughts than an union with Mr. Arlingcourt, although deeply impressed with a sense of that gentleman's great worth.

Jannette shewed me some liberal presents she had received from your cousin; but the artless creature declared, and I am sure with truth,

truth, that her feelings engaged her in his service more than any interested view; and that her heart was more affected by the expressions of his love towards me, than by the conviction of his liberality to herself.—She endeavoured, with all the eloquence of which she is mistress, to dissuade me from sending the letter I had written to Mr. Arlingcourt.—“My lord Anglois would come soon and take me away,” she said.—“Heaven forbid! Jannette,” I exclaimed.—“Could I reject so lovely and accomplished a chevalier?” she inquired; “would I not marry him?”—I explained, as well as I could, the obstacles, the impossibility.—Jannette wept again; but I felt too much to weep, and, giving her the letter for Mr. Arlingcourt, she promised it should be delivered to him with secrecy and expedition. I now, with most anxious solicitude, am waiting its event; but must close this letter ere it is decided, as an opportunity now offers to hasten it to
England,

England, where centers every earthly wish
and affection of,

Your faithful,

IPHIGENIA.

L E T T E R VII.

THE struggle for liberty, for a release from the thralldom of vice and illiberality, has proved successful. The generous feelings of Mr. Arlingcourt warmly espoused my cause, and he hastened to offer me every proof in his power—of friendship the most disinterested and sincere, since he declares it now constitutes his highest hope with regard to me ; the glowing ardors of love having yielded to the milder influence of a generous wish to promote my welfare and happiness, a wish which, at once pure and animated, will always command every good office he is en-

abled to render me : These, my Isabella, are the sentiments of exalted minds. Such is assuredly that of Mr. Arlingcourt, and every feeling heart must be deeply impressed with the sense of worth so superior to what is generally discovered.

Jannette was faithful to her trust, and a few hours conducted Mr. Arlingcourt here. He enquired for M. D'Aveneux, who instantly appeared, and (as the scene has since been described to me by Mr. Arlingcourt) addressed that gentleman with his accustomed gaiety. Mr. Arlingcourt was polite, but distant, and his air and deportment betrayed the indignation he wished to have repressed. This did not, from the first moment they met, escape the keen penetration of Monsieur ; it was evident that he marked the change in Mr. Arlingcourt's behaviour, although he endeavoured to veil his observation of it under the semblance of extreme good humour and pleasantry, and conversed with his accustomed vivacity and ease on several subjects.

subjects. But Mr. Arlingcourt heard him with impatience, till at length, wearied by his unusual volubility, which was at that time highly irksome, he suddenly interrupted him in the midst of a laughable detail, by inquiring in a serious manner after my health. Monsieur looked his chagrin, and replied, hesitatingly, that I had been much indisposed, but was then, he believed, rather better. Mr. Arlingcourt felt it impossible to conceal his emotions : Those of M. D'Avenueux, he says, appeared equal to his own ; but, after a short and confused silence, the latter attempted to conclude the relation he had before begun, and give a gayer turn to Mr. Arlingcourt's thoughts : But that gentleman was not to be diverted from his purpose, and, without attending to M. D'Avenueux's lively detail, he informed him that the motive of his visit was to request permission to see me, on a subject of importance to myself, and should request him and his lady to be present at the interview. Monsieur strove to force a smile of complacency, but became pale, faltered, VOL. I. D trembled,

trembled, and, ringing for a servant, ordered him to inform his lady of the request of Mr. Arlingcourt, and Madame D'Avenue soon made her appearance. She listened to Mr. Arlingcourt with indifference, and replied, with hauteur, — “that, indeed, she was careless who I saw; that I had been very troublesome in her family; for never, surely, was so fine a lady, so conceited, and full of airs! Why any body would have taken me for a duchess, instead of a poor distressed girl, that belonged to nobody knew who, and came from nobody knew where.”

“Wherever she came from, Madam,” said Mr. Arlingcourt, indignantly, “is not material to my present purpose; she appears to me to merit a fate much above that which now awaits her; his partiality added encomiums on your Iphigenia, which, as they are undeserved, I will not repeat. M. D'Avenue reddened like crimson, and, after pausing, he assented to Mr. Arlingcourt's opinion, while the countenance of his lady
likewise

likewise received a sanguine hue, in addition to that which rouge had given, and, biting her lips, she said, she wished she could, with any propriety, get rid of me."—"I wish so too, Madam," said Mr. Arlingcourt, "for her sake I sincerely wish it." "For her sake, Sir," she repeated, exalting her voice much above what the rules of good-breeding could justify. Monsieur arose from his seat in visible agitation, and walked several times across the room. "Yes, Madam," returned Mr. Arlingcourt, "pardon me, if I acknowledge myself unable to conceal my solicitude for Miss Monterville's welfare, or to suppress a wish that she were happier, a wish no less disinterested than ardent."—"Oh! no doubt, Sir," replied the lady, sarcastically, "they tell me pretty girls often meet with such ardent and disinterested friends in your sex." Poor as was this attempt at being pointedly severe, Mr. Arlingcourt felt the keen wound it was meant to give, and his countenance betrayed the disgust and resentment it excited; but he only said in return, "I hope Miss Mon-

ville will always be fortunate enough to find some sincere and disinterested friend, whose services may be useful to her, whenever she stands in need of assistance; as such, I come to offer her every aid in my power, and no less blest than honored shall I esteem myself, if permitted to oblige her." "Miss Monterville, and her friends, are greatly indebted to you, Sir," said M. D'Avenaux, endeavoring to repress his emotions; "but may I presume to inquire by what means you are led to conclude, that Miss Monterville is so very unhappy, or authorised to take so active an interest where she is concerned?" "I am above all disguise, Sir," replied Mr. Arlingcourt; "neither Miss Monterville's actions nor mine, I trust, stand in need of artifice or concealment. This paper, delivered to me this morning by an unknown messenger," (giving him my letter) "will explain to you, Sir, the motives of my present conduct, and will, I imagine, be allowed an ample and very sufficient authority." Monsieur ran over the few lines I had written to Mr. Arlingcourt

court with trembling haste, changing colour at every word, and when he had concluded, "Well, Sir," he said, "the lady has an undoubted right to chuse her protector, and since you are the selected object, it may, perhaps, appear impertinent in me to venture my opinion on a procedure so extraordinary, I believe so unprecedented ! A young lady to apply to a gentleman so little known for his protection ! A gentleman too, single and disengaged from connubial restraints, consequently disqualified to afford her that sanctioned asylum, which in a married state he would be empowered to do, where the countenance of one of her own sex would defend her from the baleful breath of slander, which purity itself cannot always escape. Can Miss Monterville forget these necessary etiquettes ? Can she thus risque her fair fame, and be guilty of so glaring an indelicacy ?" "Ah, the refined, angelic Miss Monterville, too !" cried Madame D'Aveneux, with an air of cruel triumph. "Can she," resumed Monsieur, daring the voice of censure, quit

the family under whose protection she was placed, and throw herself upon the mercy of a stranger, however deserving that stranger may be, when it is considered that it is a young gentleman ! Had you a lady, Mr. Arlingcourt ?” — “ Sir,”—interrupted Mr. Arlingcourt, rather sternly, unable any longer to command his patience, “ thus I view the present affair, abstracted from sophistry. Miss Monterville certainly feels the absolute necessity of a removal from your family ; for what reasons you cannot, I conceive, be ignorant. In this dilemma she looks around her for a friend, but her wishes encounter only strangers : She had seen me—we had often, with infinite pleasure on my part, conversed together ; one land gave us birth, and this circumstance alone, in scenes far removed from home, often creates a kind of gentle attachment, authorised by the strictest friendship, between susceptible minds, and such, assuredly, is that of Miss Monterville.” “ In short, Sir, she did not suspect me for a villain ; she has thought proper to honor me with
her

her confidence, and to beseech me to promote her wished return to England, a wish, which you see, she says, has hitherto been wholly disregarded, although often expressed. This confidence is a distinction I will, if possible, merit, by shewing the same attention to her happiness as if she were my sister."

"I once," he continued, after a pause, "aspired to a dearer, softer tie, was ambitious of a higher honor, a more distinguished preference, a circumstance, perhaps, hitherto unknown to you, or your lady; for, as my suit was unsuccessful, I never mentioned my wishes to any but their object, and delicacy, I doubt not, made her conceal it from you; but, in the present case, to avoid, as much as possible, any reflection injurious to the dignity or fame of Miss Monterville, I scruple not to avow, that I not long since made her a tender of my hand and fortune—unworthy as I know I am of such a blessing: But she rejected me, yet in a manner so gentle, so peculiar to herself, as enhanced her value in

my estimation, it cannot, therefore, with any shadow of probability, be imagined, or pretended by the most malicious, that Miss Monterville would form any design on the affections of a man, whose honorable addresses she has declined."

"Whether she has or not, or whatever her views may be," said Madame D'Aveneux, with much pique and hauteur, "I imagine, of but little consequence—at least, I answer for myself," looking significantly at Monsieur.—"I do not pretend to dispute Miss Monterville's right to dispose of herself as she thinks proper, nor to judge of her motives; I only wish she had chosen some more convenient place than my family for the display of her talents: I shall blush to mention her to the noble and worthy family, by whose recommendation I was induced to take her."

"And for their sakes," added Monsieur, "I should be concerned at Miss Monterville's

ville's being guilty of any impropriety while under our protection."—"Concerned!" repeated his lady, angrily, "really that is vastly odd; these sort of persons cannot give me one moment concern: I am indifferent to all they can do. One meets with so much ingratitude, that I am surprised at nothing; if I was I should be always wondering." "But I am less a philosopher," said M. D'Avenoux, shocked at his wife's absurdity, and blushing for the language in which it was uttered, "and I freely acknowledge that I should regret Miss Monterville's quitting us abruptly, because it is probable she may by that means be involved in new and unforeseen difficulties, which I would, if possible, prevent; for she is certainly an amiable young person, though with some peculiarities and prejudices, that, I fear, may impede her happiness through life."

"Lord! what stuff!" cried his lady —
"what have we to do with her happiness, or

her peculiarities, or any thing about her? You are mighty conscientious," affecting a laugh.—"Most generous and considerate, it must be allowed," said Mr. Arlingcourt, in a tone of irony; "but since, Sir, you cannot prevail on Miss Monterville to renounce her prejudices, why, I fear, she must abide by their consequences: However, Sir, if you will undertake to effect Miss Monterville's return to her natal land, my assistance will, perhaps, be useless."—"That I will most readily do," was the reply, and, ringing for Jannette, M. D'Avenex ordered her to acquaint me that Mr. Arlingcourt waited to see me. With grateful transport I received this message; but being too ill to admit of a possibility of quitting my chamber, as I was so extremely weak as to be unable to walk across the room, Monsieur and Madame D'Avenex conducted him thither.

On his entrance, Mr. Arlingcourt appeared quite struck with the alteration in my looks—no spectre was, surely, ever more pallid—I
had

had not tasted food for many days—grief had wholly occupied my mind, and my spirits drooped with my form. A tear shone in Mr. Arlingcourt's eye, as he gazed on me—a torrent fell involuntarily from mine. I grieve to see you thus, Miss Monterville," he said, in a soft but faltering voice. These words, so compassionate, and soothing, awakened every feeling of my soul, and the agony of my mind would not be repressed.

"Pardon me," I said, as soon as I was able to speak, "and accept my gratitude for this visit—it shews the generous goodness of your nature—your pity for an unhappy girl—far removed from every scene where once she tasted happiness:—friends, alas! I have none." — "Say not so," said Mr. Arlingcourt, in accents of gentlest pity.—"None, Sir, that are enabled to relieve my bursting heart; but, in my native land, perhaps, I may again find them—there I wish to be." "And Monsieur D'Aveneux assures me you shall soon be gratified in that wish."—Mr.

D 6

Arlingcourt

Arlingcourt returned :—" I do, Miss Monterville," said Monsieur, " and I am sorry that you have had cause of complaint," casting a keen glance toward his lady, who stood by, pale with anger and malice ; " but as soon as your health permits, I will myself attend you to Calais ; in your present state I do not imagine such a step practicable." —

" Then, Sir, you judge wrong," I replied, " Heaven will give me strength equal to my feelings—equal to what necessity claims—the necessity of hastening to that dear spot where all my wishes center. In my distress I was impelled to solicit the goodness and protection of Mr. Arlingcourt ; for when miseries envelope us around, even the most scrupulous must sometimes overlook those nice punctilioes which it is their wish to observe. Of many embarrassing circumstances, when compelled to make a choice, it is surely most prudent to select that which appears the least so ; therefore, in the present dilemma, my heart suggested an application

to

to Mr. Arlingcourt."—"And I would serve you, Madam, with my life," said that gentleman, looking at my pallid aspect, and fainting figure, with deepest compassion; "I cannot then accept of any other protection in exchange for yours:"—I added, I believe gloomily, "Since you generously give me that assurance."—"But if Monsieur D'Aveneux will unite his endeavors with mine to render you happier, by expediting your return to England, if he will honor us with the addition of his company to see you embark," said Mr. Arlingcourt, in a tone of mildest expostulation.—"I shall be glad," I rejoined, knowing the delicacy from which this proposal arose, and, feeling its propriety, I added, "I shall be obliged."

"But since my proffered care is not deemed sufficient by Miss Monterville," said M. D'Aveneux, resentfully—"I am compelled by a just sense of what is due to myself, to withdraw it, and resign the office of protector wholly to you, Sir, who are, doubtless,

less, preferable, confessedly so in the lady's opinion, whom chiefly it concerns."

"Certainly, Mr. Arlingcourt is much the properest person," said Madame D'Aveneux, superciliously, "since Miss Monterville makes choice of him, I am sure it would be cruel to spoil their party." Monsieur bowed his assent to this observation, which owed all its sting to the ill-nature by which it was dictated.—"I now wish," rejoined the lady, "that Miss Monterville will, in this gentleman's presence, exculpate us, otherwise people may suppose we have ill-treated her." I was incapable of speaking, and a silence of some moments prevailed. "For my part," she continued, with piqued hauteur, "I never treated any person dependant on me so well as I have done Miss Monterville." I could not suppress a faint smile, of pity rather than anger or contempt, and Madame D'Aveneux thus proceeded, with an indignant blush, "I say, Mr. Arlingcourt, the late alteration in Miss Monterville's health

health and person may induce the world to conclude she has been used unkindly; but if people take it into their heads, conceited, splenetic, proud, and ill-humoured, who is to be answerable? I am every moment afraid she will die—for I do not think she has tasted food these four or five days, on purpose to vex us.”—Mr. Arlingcourt clasped his hands together, and uttered an exclamation—“I am sure she has not,” repeated the lady.—“Nor ever can, Madam, while under this roof!” I faltered out, in extreme agitation. Monsieur fixed his eyes on mine in gloomy silence:—“No, you will die, for pure spite,” added Madame D’Aveneux.—“Heaven forbid she should die at present, from any cause!” exclaimed Mr. Arlingcourt; “but if you abstain from the necessary means of existence, how dreadful must be the event, Miss Monterville!”

“It is not pride, it is not obstinacy,” I replied; “but when the mind is sore oppressed, the frame will suffer with it. This
5 place

place (I cannot conceal it) is hateful to me: I loathe the sight of food, and tears, instead of sleep, ingross my nights."—"Will you then," said Mr. Arlingcourt, hesitatingly, "will you accept an asylum, such as I am empowered to offer? I have not a wife to receive or console you, it is true; but there is an elderly woman superintends my domestic affairs—she shall be your constant attendant—she shall never quit your side—she is respectable, and well disposed: If therefore Monsieur and Madame D'Aveneux and yourself approve ———."

"Oh! pray do not bestow a thought on our approbation, Sir, in your resolves," said the former, and, bowing low, he wished Mr. Arlingcourt a good morning.—"As then some misunderstanding subsists in the present case, that appears irreconcilable," resumed that gentleman, greatly embarrassed, "and as an immediate removal seems indispensable to you, Miss Monterville, surely none, under such circumstances, can condemn

denn your taking such steps as may relieve your spirits, nay, probably, preserve your life. At a time like this, delay is madness—my character is known—my services, most disinterested services, are yours; and there cannot be any impropriety, where (as in my family) there are many of your own sex to attend you. If you will, therefore, do me the honor to make my home yours, until enabled to undertake your purposed journey, which I must subscribe to M. D'Avenaux's opinion in thinking that you are not at present. I shall esteem myself fortunate in being at all assisting to your ease and comfort."

"I accept your generous friendship with gratitude," I replied, governed by a sentiment which, I believe, I before expressed, that, in a state of perplexity, the path least thorny is the safest, and most proper to pursue."

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“ I place myself, with firm reliance, under your protection ;” I added, “ I feel, indeed, the absolute necessity of a removal from hence.” — “ Pardon me, Madam,” I said, turning to her who ought to have protected me ; “ but there are sensations in this heart, which I find it impossible to conquer. I do not imagine myself free from error : I may, perhaps, be what you term proud ; but is it not the sort of pride, permit me to say, which is a virtue ? I have been accused, and such accusations as dwell heavily upon my spirits, every object here increases the gloom within my mind. I never merited suspicions such as have arisen. I am conscious of having strictly done my duty, of having made it my study, Madam, to serve and oblige you ; and if there have been improprieties, did they originate or find countenance with me ?”

“ Self-justice,” I added, “ now compels me to speak : How have I ever offended you ?” but finding I was not to expect an answer, I thus went on : “ In the cool moment of dispassionate reason your heart must acquit me

me of any intentional or actual fault: Thus, then, we part; the lamp of life burns but faintly within this poor emaciated form — peace alone can restore it." — "And, no doubt, you will find the peace you want with Mr. Arlingcourt," she said, with a malignant sneer: "A few hours hence, then, Miss Monterville," said that gentleman, "I will return for you, or," pausing, "if now you can accompany me, I really think no time should be lost."

I acquiesced intirely in his opinion, and, telling him that in half an hour I would be ready, he said he would wait below: I then requested Madame D'Aveneux would permit Jannette to pack up my cloaths, being myself unable. She bowed a haughty acquiescence, and, retiring, followed by Mr. Arlingcourt, Jannette soon appeared: But, when she heard I was going, she burst into an agony of tears, and begged to attend my fortunes. She threw herself passionately on her knees to enforce this request; but could

I permit so kind, so disinterested a creature to involve herself in my calamities?" "No, Jannette," I said, "now we must part: I have enough of wretchedness myself, and nothing else in prospect; but should happier days ever appear for me, I will remember you; be assured, if good fortune ever deigns to smile on me, you shall share her bounties."

"Then you promise me that I shall serve you, when you want a faithful servant," said Jannette, weeping on my hand, as she pressed it between her own to her bosom.

"You shall, indeed, indeed," I replied; "Never can I forget your attachment, your fidelity, your worth." Her sorrows were softened by this assurance, and, after she had adjusted all things to my wish, we bade each other adieu. We both shed tears, and I believe were equally affected. "I did not again see M. D'Avenaux, or his lady. Two men servants carried me in their arms to
Mr.

Mr. Arlingcourt's carriage, so much was I reduced, and so intirely unable to walk, that gentleman himself lifted me into the carriage, and we soon arrived at his residence. The perturbation of mind brought a return of my illness, and I was again confined to my bed. Mr. Arlingcourt's housekeeper never quitted my side, day or night; her kind attention and care did much toward my recovery. I continued there near a month, when, having regained sufficient strength to walk about the house and gardens, Mr. Arlingcourt readily acceded to my intreaty of hastening my departure for England; and, accompanied by himself and my faithful female attendant, I arrived at Calais, by easy journies, last night, and embrace this opportunity, while he is gone to inquire when the packet sails, to conclude this long letter.

Mr. Arlingcourt has given me many commendatory letters to different ladies, to whom he is related in England, and who, he thinks, may have it in their power to serve me,

me, and to wish impatiently for the moment of my arrival, which will, at least, bring me nearer to my Isabella.

Adieu ! Mr. Arlingcourt is returned ; the wind sits fair, and I hasten on board. How painful it is to part with those we esteem ! the sadness pictured in Mr. Arlingcourt's countenance affects me deeply ! Had there never been an Ethbert ! But let me avoid that theme. Farewell, most amiable and generous of friends.

Mr. Arlingcourt summons me away ; how mournfully penetrating his air and accent !

IPHIGENIA.

LETTER

LETTER VIII.

TO apprise my Isabella, that I am safely landed on our native shore, is the first task that friendship and inclination enjoins on my arrival: You will not, I am sure, abandon your Iphigenia in distress, nor withdraw your regard from the unfortunate being on whom you so lately bestowed your warm affection. Though now banished the presence of each other, by a cruel necessity, separated by the mandate of your noble relations, to whom we both owe obedience, you, from the strong claim of consanguinity, and the high obligation which their care and tenderness shewn to your early years justly imposes, and myself from a gratitude never to be effaced; yet, though circumstances which we both regret, deny the bliss of social intercourse in any way but this, let our faithful hearts,

hearts, my gentle friend, be never disunited : Your kindness will support me under every adverse event, and the disinterested generosity of your affection, will carry a certain reward with it, the reward which unaffected goodness always secures.

The daughter of that good old lady, who protected my infant state when unknown and helpless, the child of sorrow, I was left upon her charity, is, you know, the wife of an opulent trader in London, with her I mean to seek a present home ; she cannot, sure, refuse me a shelter, from respect to the memory of that worthy parent to whom I was dear, no less dear, I believe, than this her only child. Tears pace involuntarily over my cheeks, whenever I recal to my mind the kindness of my first protectress, second mother. She was gentle, benevolent, and pious, and heaven has, I trust, assigned a larger portion of bliss to her present lot, for her generous compassion of my orphan state. In early childhood, when the powers
of

of my mind were yet but opening, how have I sat and wept, to hear her dwell upon the beauties, the accomplishments, and secret sorrows of my unhappy mother. On every Valentine's morn, "alas!" she would say, "This day always brings that dear young lady to my thoughts. I see over again the chaise breaking down at our door, and my poor, worthy husband going to help the sweet creature out, and prevent her being crushed under the wheel. Lord! it was a piteous sight, she looked so pale, and yet so beautiful, I shall never forget her as long as I live, and my heart bleeds for her sufferings, especially when I think of the condition she was in, for that night, my dear child." She would say, looking at me, with her eyes brimful of tears, "that very night you was born; but the poor lady, your mother, was taken to a better world. We could not learn who or what she was; her senses were destroyed by trouble and anguish, and the thought of leaving you, added to the rest, for she died calling upon heaven to protect

and bleſs her child, that lay heavily upon her heart in her moſt diſtracted moments ! But God reſt her ſoul—ſhe is a ſaint in glory, I hope, and heaven will, I think, protect and bleſs you, as ſhe prayed. To the beſt of my power I will protect you likewiſe, and take the ſame care of you, as if you was my own. We aſked the driver of the chaiſe where ſhe came from ; but he could only ſay that he brought her from an inn at Dover, and when we had made inquiry there, they knew nothing at all about her, ſo what could we do ? My huſband had a tender heart, and, after he had tried every way to know who your mamma belonged to, put an advertiſement in the papers, and did all that was poſſible to no effect. Why, he ſaid, he would always take care of you as long as he lived, and now he is gone, I will do the ſame. We did not know what name to give you at firſt ; but looking over a ſmall portmantua trunk, containing theſe few wearables, which I keep for you, I obſerved that name by which you were chriſtened, in the corner of a
moſt

most rich and curious embroidered handkerchief. We thought, to be sure, that Iphigenia must be your mamma's name, and that it was the most proper for you, and, not knowing how to manage about a surname, young 'Squire Monterville offered to stand godfather for you, so, as he was a great heir, and a good lad as ever was born, we consented, thinking the family might be a friend to you, and you were baptized Iphigenia Monterville, and you never need be ashamed of your name, for the Monterville's are a noble and ancient family : But the young 'Squire died soon after, and there you lost that friend ; but he gave me a diamond ring from his finger for you, and, please God, it shall be taken care of 'till you grow a woman."

This diamond ring, you know, my Isabella, I have, and wish ever to preserve it, as the valuable relic of a feeling heart, the sacred memento of a noble and amiable youth. This precious gift, with that small

miniature set in gold, but unadorned, which was taken from the bosom of my mother, and in which I always think I behold the partner of her fate, and trace the resemblance of my father, the symmetry and expression of whose features, as there portrayed, you have often said, surpassed any thing of mortal beauty you ever beheld, together with the contents of the portmantua-trunk, found with my mother, which was several changes of linen, two riding dresses, a valuable ring, which my mother wore on her finger, three plain mourning rings, and another with hair, with a device of an altar, inscribed to Virtuous Love, on which are two hearts, burning in its pure fires, and, for a motto, "Amor Mutuat." These, with the embroidered handkerchief, are the only possessions of your Iphigenia; but they are treasures which, you know, my heart values highly, and I am now induced to repeat the mention of them (which to you were else needless) as it is my wish, should any thing happen to me, that you, my amiable

able friend, claim them for your own, and preserve them for my sake. To the inclosed address I will soon expect your answer, and hope you will long remember, and tenderly regard

Your

IPHIGENIA.

LETTER IX.

AFTER long waiting in anxious expectation of a letter from my charming friend, the cause of her mysterious silence is explained, and my regret hopeless. Sorrow overwhelms me, and innumerable difficulties press on every side.

Little did I imagine that your noble relations could so easily be prevailed on to part
E 3 with

with their Isabella—her whom, from her early infancy, they were accustomed to view as a darling daughter—next to Ethbert, the best comfort of their declining years. Who is there in India can compensate for the attachments you leave behind? Your father, it is said, wished for your presence, and I own parental claims are powerful: But will he recompense you for other losses? Can he supply the place of all those so long endeared to your affections? Will he be such a friend as your heart pants for, such as you have known? You never yet beheld this parent, for whom you tear yourself from every dearer tie; but, I trust, you will find him all that your gentle heart can imagine or hope. — Separated from your mother by an adverse fortune (as I have heard) some months ere you saw the light, he sought a distant clime; your mother survived your birth a few months, then sunk into a premature grave; her heart was broken by the absence of a husband she adored. From that moment the parents of Ethbert adopted you for their
own,

own, his mother being the sister of yours. Your father was yet in the pride of life ; he formed a new attachment in India, and was soon united to his second choice, by whom he has a numerous family. Ah ! why is the fervor of tender attachments so much more generally unchangeable in the breasts of our softer sex ?

When you told me that although you had a parent, yet, such was the indifference he evinced about you, that you could not but consider yourself, in fact, an orphan, wholly dependant on your uncle and aunt, my heart participated in all your emotions, well knowing that, assuredly, I am a wretched orphan, a hopeless wanderer ; you, I am led to believe from present appearances, will now, in the blessing of a father's love, be convinced that you drew too hasty a conclusion.

The similarity of fate, which we have often imagined to subsist between us, first made my heart glow with affection toward

E 4

you :

you : Your ten thousand amiable, endearing qualities, improved the rising ardor, a sympathy of soul unveiled itself, a friendship, superior to all distinctions of rank or fortune ensued, and, forgetful of my humble rank, aided by your noble-minded cousin, you raised me to an equality with yourselves.

The lady, under whose roof I sought an asylum, on my arrival here, received me with apathy ; my heart, ever ready to expand itself toward the social affections, keenly felt the blow ; her coldness checked my native warmth, disappointment silenced the voice of friendship within my bosom, and the tear of gladness, at again beholding her with whom my earliest years were passed, and to whose parents I was so greatly indebted, trickled mournfully over my cheeks, intirely disregarded. My sensibility was deeply wounded by a reception so different from what I expected, so repugnant to my feelings, and gratitude for what I owed her parents, paid its languid

languid tribute, unaccompanied by any affectionate sentiment toward herself.

Mrs. Jefferies being married, from the calm and humble quiet of a country life, soon became intoxicated by the gaieties and pleasures of the metropolis, and is now much too fine a lady to testify any of the genuine feelings of human nature. Although ten years older than I am, she affects to have forgotten those scenes of artless joy, those days of peaceful innocence, for ever hallowed by my memory, and wonders that their recollection finds a place in my mind. How inferior is she, with all the tinsel glare of finery, with all the parade of fashion, to her ingenuous and respectable parents! How greatly inferior in dignity of mind, in innate worth, in soundness of understanding, and even in that resistless charm of manners, which pure, unfulled rectitude of heart, and native ease, imparts!

E 5

Mr.

Mr. Jefferies is a plodding trader, whose ruling passion is, to use his own phrase, "to mind the main chance." By steadily adhering to this point, he has already made considerable additions to the fortune left him by his father: His motive for addressing Miss Sanxy, was not admiration of her person, though she is what the world in general calls pretty; she has a fine complexion, a high country bloom, and a set of unmeaning features, of which, almost, any doll-maker may, with ease, form an exact resemblance.

Mr. Jefferies thought, from the mode of her education, and the character of her mother, that in her he should secure a frugal, notable wife, who would carefully attend to his domestic affairs, and unite with him in a strict observance of his favorite maxim; but in this hope he is unsuccessful. Mrs. Jefferies is as extravagant a wife as he could have selected from the purlieus of Cheapside, or the Minories: They are constantly thwarting each other's inclinations, and mutual unhappiness

pinefs is the confequence. One lovely child, a girl, in whom I often trace a refemblance to her amiable grandmother, inftead of proving a bleffing, is a fource of perpetual difpute.— Though now but two years old, mamma is for fending her to a tip-top boarding-fchool, as ſhe elegantly expreffes it, while the father infifts, that ſhe ſhall be brought up like a tradesman's daughter, and qualified for a tradesman's wife, not ſpoiled by keeping company with quality, and by that means be fit for nothing but to run off with ſome gambler, who, in his own language, “will ſoon bring the noble to nine-pence, that he has ſcraped ſo hard for.”

Like rival competitors for diſtinguiſhed honors, or public favor, a kind of natural war, or to adopt a more familiar phraſe, a perpetual jangle, ſubſiſts between this ill-matched pair, and I ſeverely feel the miſfortune of being obliged to minds like theirs. Whether, in ſome unguarded moment, I ever dropt a ſentiment unfavorable to Mrs. Jeffe-

ries's plans and pursuits, or from whatever cause it can arise, I know not ; but she now seems to regard me, not only with coldness, but antipathy, and, too nicely susceptible of every wound, every unkindness, where I hoped, at least, a cordial welcome for the short time I purpose to continue in her family ; my residence here becomes each day more irksome. The more I revolve on the behaviour of Mrs. Jefferies, the more unable I am to assign any probable motive or cause for the smothered disgust with which, it is evident, she beholds me, and which, from whatsoever it originates, is a source of no trivial disquiet to me ; wholly dependant as I now am upon her bounty, and shuddering at the apprehension of losing even this protection, of being devoid of a roof to shelter me, and of being thrown, intirely friendless and unknown, upon the mercy of the world ; a world, of which, although I am a stranger to it, I have heard enough to make a firmer heart than mine tremble.

How am I denied all those blessings which can, in my opinion, endear us to life? For the joys resulting from family union, from the ties of parental and fraternal affection, I have ever sighed in vain. My first kind protectors (the parents of Mrs. Jefferies) whose benevolent hearts strove to supply, by care and tenderness the most unfeigned, all other losses, how soon were they removed by the inexorable tyrant, to whom mortality is subject?

In the unfortunate Mr. Castlethwait's family I next found an asylum, and my childhood glided away in calm felicity, till the dreadful catastrophe of that noble pair cut off my every hope of happiness through them, and again left me unfriended; when that lovely woman, the sister of Lord Danbury, took me to her gentle heart, and proved, indeed, a benefactress; but her sudden death again involved me in sorrow, and exposed me to unkindness; then, you know, it was, that the hospitable gates, of Arran-Vale, were
opened

opened to receive me—there passed, in blissful innocence, and social joy, the dawn of maturity. There generous friendship awaited me—there I found more than ever I could hope, in the distinction of the noble Ethbert, in the soft and feeling soul of my Isabella: There I experienced happiness superior to what even the most exalted gratitude can sufficiently prize! How powerfully did your goodness alleviate the severities of fortune! But soon did sadness throw her mantle over the enchanting scene—suspicion banished me from Arran-Vale! When I reflect on that cruel blow, my eyes fill with tears of anguish, and scarcely will my trembling hand conduct my pen. Driven from France, again I seek a quiet shelter in my native isle. — Heaven grant that my search, my humble, ardent prayers, the virtuous, unassuming wishes of my depressed heart, prove not utterly ineffectual. Surely, I shall not be intirely deserted! Surely, there is one above, one who pities our sorrows, and our failings, and will never abandon the weary sufferer,

who

who trusts in 'him ; but will, I doubt not, impel some gentle spirit to comfort and befriend me. Thus I argue with myself, whenever a cloud of discontent arises, and I at length subdue each tumultuous passion, acquiesce in the dispensations of Providence, and am thankful for the blessings I enjoy. I endeavor to look forward, with an eye of hope, through the present dreary prospect, and, sometimes, sooth myself with flattering illusions, with bright and smiling days in store for me.

Whether your cousin is at Arran-Vale, or aught about that dear family, I have not been able to learn since my arrival ; but may the purest bliss ever await them and you, will, through life, be the unceasing prayer of

Your

IPHIGENIA.

LETTER X.

THAT you are happy, happy beyond your hope, communicates unspeakable satisfaction to my heart, compensates, as much as any thing can do, for the loss I sustain in your departure, and supports me through every vicissitude, every perplexity, and many are those by which I am surrounded.

What errors have I to mourn! I have involuntarily wounded the peace, sullied the fame, and obscured the brightest prospects of him I would die to serve! His partial selection of me, in preference to so many more distinguished, who court his smile, and sigh to be the objects of his choice, is to me only a cause of sadness and regret, when I reflect on the rash procedures of which it is a source. His noble heart, pierced by Jan-
nette's

nette's artless description of my sufferings in France, hastened to pour its emotions before me, and snatch me from the evils by which I am enveloped. Would to heaven he had better known himself and me!—had considered what was due to his own rank and my feelings—had remembered my firm and irrevocable resolve never to be the partner of a clandestine alliance, nor consent to destroy the pleasing expectations of his family, subvert their favorite plans, and, perhaps, embitter the remainder of their lives. But, instead of obeying the dictates of duty and prudence, he quitted Arran-Vale immediately on receiving Jannette's last letter to him, and embarked for France, where he arrived a few days after I had left it. There he was informed by Monsieur and Madame D'Aveneux, that I had eloped with Mr. Arlingcourt; but was soon undeceived by Jannette, whose account was confirmed by the latter gentleman, and, after severely reprobating the conduct of Monsieur and his Lady towards me, and loading Mr. Arlingcourt with

with assurances of eternal gratitude and esteem, for the generous attention I had experienced from him, he bade adieu to him and Jannette, whose fidelity and attachment he liberally rewarded, and purposed an immediate return to England ; but his arrival is an event I cannot announce, and I am the prey of anxiety in addition to many other causes of disquietude.

Jannette, either from suspicion on their part of her zeal in my cause, or a disgust on her own, which she found it impossible to suppress, has quitted the family of M. D'Aveneux, and is taken, as an assistant to the good old housekeeper, into that of Mr. Arlingcourt.

The unkindness of Mrs. Jefferies is far from being diminished, and with the cause of it, I believe, I am not unacquainted, and its discovery assures me of the impossibility of a long continuance here. From some freak of caprice, to which the votaries of gain are sometimes

sometimes as liable as the rest of the world, Mr. Jefferies declares me one of his greatest favorites, and is perpetually setting me forth to his wife, and all her female visitors, as a model for them to copy. That simplicity of dress, which I ever adopted from choice, he points out for their imitation, and by other similar practices of his, I am become the object of all their aversion.

“ Indeed, Polly,” said this sagacious citizen, as we were this morning at breakfast, “ I wish you would take example by Miss Iphy,” which is the elegant appellation they both give me. The lady turned up her nose, and tossed her head disdainfully, “ I wish,” he continued, with a grin of self-applause, that I had been a bit wiser in making my choice — why, Miss Iphy would have made fifty times a better partner for such as me—she has no pride, nor extravagance, nor affectation, nor airs, and she is a deal better taught besides.” I felt myself in a most awkward situation; but distressed as I was at
this

this discourse, and, greatly as I wished to give a turn to the attention of Mr. Jefferies, I knew not how to effect it, and remained silent and embarrassed; but my confusion was little noticed by Mr. Jefferies, and he thus proceeded:

“To be sure Miss Iphy was too young, as one may say, for a wife, when I made my choice; but yet I do not think she was so much of a child then as you are now. Why, she looks more respectable, and like what you ought to be, than you do yourself, with your hair like a bartelemy doll, and not a bit of cap, nor stay, nor handkerchief, nor apron; but your curls flying about, and your fine sweeping cambrick dress up to your throat, with fifty frills, like good Queen Bess, besides all the nasty, filthy daub upon your face, which I can see plain enough, though, I suppose, you think I am blind. God gave you a good skin, and you are spoiling it with white lead, and in a year or two more you will add one to the number of those poor pitiable objects
that

that one meets every day in the streets, with faces just like a piece of soiled white leather. I wish, I say, that you would give up these fashionable fancies, and follow Miss Iphy's example, and be always neat and clean, and dress like a modest woman, and be content with the skin nature has given you, for I am sick of these fine ways; and besides, I never was used to them, nor you neither, till you took it into your wife's noddle to turn gay lady, because you had the luck to marry a rich man, which, to be sure, though I say it, you have, there is not a warmer man in the city in my line."

"In your line!" exclaimed Mrs. Jefferies, ready to burst with passion, "in your line, Mr. Jefferies! I would have you to know, that I think both your line and yourself most shockingly vulgar."—"Vulgar!" repeated Mr. Jefferies, "vulgar! Do you call me vulgar, that has made a gentlewoman of you? That took you, as a body may say, off the dunghill!"—"Dunghill, Sir! dunghill!"
echoed

echoed the enraged lady, "Oh! you false man! But I see the reason of it all," giving me a look that told her meaning.—"Yes, I do; I am no more blind than you are. This comes of kindness." Here she burst into tears, but still went on. "We were as happy a couple as any in the ward of Farringdon, till within these six weeks" (which is just the time I have been with them.)—"Yes, I say, we were."—"And I say we were not," rejoined Mr. Jefferies, "nor long enough before, and that you know full well. My only comfort these two years has been in my little Maria, and that pleasure you will poison if you can, by bringing the child up to despise her own father, because he is not a fine gentleman; but that shall not be, if I can help it."—"I only desired to bring my girl up decent," returned the lady, still sobbing, "as she will have a good fortune; but you have got so many queer fangled notions in your head, that, I know well enough, you will break my heart. Good *edgycation* is a great blessing, and if you come to that, Miss Iphy

Iphy has had the very best of *edgycation*, though it has been, as one may say, by the bye, and picked up by being with others, and used to great company. Lord, what improvement she got in 'Squire Castlethwait's family, who took her after my poor mother died, who taught her to read and spell herself; and 'Squire Castlethwait and his lady was *purdigeous* fond of her, till the 'Squire, poor man, made away with himself, and his lady was put in a mad-house, so after that Miss Iphy went to Lord Danbury's, at Danbury-Hall, and there his Lordship's widow-sister taught her all sorts of different accomplishments her own self, ay, dancing, and music, and drawing, and painting, and geography, and many things beside; but that good lady, who had many years been in a moping, melancholy way after the death of her husband, was found dead one day in her closet; she had been often troubled with fits, and one proved fatal, and his Lordship soon after married a beautiful fine lady, and Miss Iphy was kept among the servants, and noticed

ticed by nobody a long time, till the Hon. Mr. and Mrs. Worthington, of Arran-Vale, who knew her at 'Squire Castlethwait's, coming home from abroad, and hearing how she was treated by young Lord and Lady Danbury, took compassion on her, and she went to be companion to their niece, the nabob's daughter, Miss Isabella Adman. — Well, there she got more learning, as I was a saying, so, as you hold her up for a pattern, I do not see how you can object to *edgyca-tion*."

Why, as to that," said Mr. Jefferies, who listened very attentively, it is well enough for they who know how to make a proper use of it; but when it is above their sphere, it turns many a poor weak woman's head. Sensible people, is quite a different matter, they may be trusted with any thing. Miss Iphy knows how to make a good use of her learning, besides, I have often heard you say, that your good mother was sure she was a Lady born, and that her behaviour always
told

told her as much, from the time she was a child; therefore, as one may say, learning and polite manners are natural to her; but, poor thing, I do not see she is much the better for them; it is all nothing without the cash. Howsomever, Polly, as to you, it is quite another matter; you are only a plain tradesman's wife, and nobody suspects you of having noble blood in your veins; so all I say is, I do not like you should set yourself up quite so much, nor give into all the ways of foolish women."

"I do not give into any thing unbecoming my station," replied Mrs. Jefferies, with tartness; "and as to being like other people I must; and though my blood is not noble, it is gentle."

"Not always," said Mr. Jefferies, shrewdly.

"I say, I am come of a good family, and that you know," rejoined the chagrined Lady, "and what is more, I am come of honest
VOL. I. F parents,

parents, and know who I belong to, and never was brought up on charity, and that is more than every body can say." I felt the tears stealing over my face; but I never raised my eyes from a book I held in my hand; and Mrs. Jefferies added, "People should know when they are well off, and behave as becomes them; and as to my luck in marrying you, you know well enough I might have picked and chused in the country: There was the rich shopkeeper, Simson's son and heir, was dying for me; and young 'Squire Jenkins would have had me with all his soul."

"What—for a Miss?" said Mr. Jefferies, looking archly with his sharp grey eyes, as if conscious of having said something smart. Mrs. Jefferies could no longer contain herself within the bounds of decency; she started from her seat, and in so doing over-turned the tea table, and many of its apparatus were broken into shatters. I stooped to gather up the fragments; but she pushed me violently away, and my shoe being entangled in the
carpet,

carpet, I fell to the floor, and my head coming against the corner of a mahogany table, the blood streamed in a torrent from the wound. Mr. Jefferies ran and raised me in his arms, execrating his wife's conduct. The bell was rang with violence—I fainted several times—the whole family crowded around me—I was conveyed to my own chamber, where I have remained the whole day, without any other visitor than little Maria (who is extremely fond of me) and one of the maid servants. I hope the hurt I have received is not material; but these events have determined me against continuing here much longer: Yet, whither, my Isabella, can I turn my unprotected, unfriended steps? Heaven only can direct me! Already have I applied myself to all Mr. Arlingcourt's recommendations; but the result is, some civilities, and many promises.

Adieu!

LETTER XI.

HEARING that Lord and Lady Danbury were in town, I formed a resolution of waiting on them, judging it likely that they would be induced by my present forlorn situation, and the remembrance of my having been once a part of their family, to exert their influence towards procuring me an eligible protection, which, from their numerous and elegant acquaintance, I know they were so well empowered to do. Full of hope, I therefore called at their door several mornings, but access was not to be found; neither the noble Peer nor his Lady were visible to such humble mortals as myself, and I was returning hopeless from my last essay to obtain an interview with either of them, when, after revolving many plans in my

my mind, I determined to address a letter to Lord Danbury, as I could not persuade myself that nobleman would have refused to see me, had he ever known I had called, or to serve me, had he been acquainted with my friendless state : I, therefore, resolved to write to him in preference to his Lady, as I knew him to possess the best dispositions of the two when I was under his roof, and, previous to his marriage, to have been extremely kind to me. To address him, therefore, and try his friendship, was my fixed intention ; but, recollecting that I wanted a recruit of pens and writing-paper, I ordered the hackney coachman to stop at the first stationer's shop he came to, which happening to be a very capital one in Piccadilly. I got out of the coach to make my little purchase, and the first object I beheld, on entering the shop, was Lord Danbury, reading a news-paper.

My suffused complexion betrayed the emotions I felt. His lordship regarded me attentively, but evidently without recognition,

and, after looking at each other alternately some minutes, with awkward embarrassment on my part, I at length summoned courage to inquire if his Lordship had, indeed, quite forgotten me, since my residence at Danbury Hall. Again he scrutinized my features; but replied, smiling, and in a half whisper, that he had never, till that moment, beheld a creature half so lovely. This gallant speech, while it increased my confusion, obliged me to acquaint him with my name. "Miss Monterville," exclaimed his Lordship, "what, my little ward! my little Iphigenia! you are really most astonishingly altered, though you were always a sweet creature," lowering his voice, "and your present appearance realizes what, in your years of childhood, I have often said, that you would make a Divine woman." I did not much relish these high-flown compliments; but concluding, that it was such fashionable gallantry as his Lordship's rank authorized, without the imputation of harm, or the smallest idea of giving offence, I only smiled, and blushed
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in return, and, after a pause, told his Lordship, that I was just come from his house, where I had ventured to call for several successive days, hoping I might have been so fortunate as to be honored by an interview, either with himself or Lady, as I was in an extremely unpleasant situation, and was solicitous of being received into some worthy family, who might be disposed to afford me a protection above absolute servitude, in return for my time, and unremitting study to oblige; and from this wish I had formed a resolution of applying to his Lordship's goodness, and frequently left my name at his door.

“Upon my honor,” said the gallant Peer, “this is a piece of intelligence, that, on many accounts, surprises me, as I never knew of your having called, or should certainly have received you with a vast deal of pleasure, and will, be assured, do any thing in my power to assist and render you happy. You are amazingly improved! — But—stay—I think,

think, you went from us, to Worthington's, of Arran-Vale; as well as I recollect, they were very kind to you; I think I heard, good peculiar people; they have not appeared in the world these many years, and I am told they keep a beautiful niece, and a most elegant young man, their son, immured with them in the old family Abbey; it is an odd whim, one would think they meant to people a monastery, and so, I suppose, your spirit began not to brook the confinement, no wonder, faith, ha—ha—ha; was that the case, my little dimpling Iphigenia?"

"No really, my Lord," I replied: "I was extremely happy, gratefully happy, at Arran-Vale; but some how or other I was not so fortunate as to retain the affection I first possessed from my benefactors."

"No wonder!" exclaimed his Lordship: "I suppose they trembled for the immaculate heart of their peerless boy; and, faith, you are an object of most seducing danger." I
told

told the gay nobleman he was disposed to rally, when, in a more serious manner, he assured me he was likewise disposed to serve me, and begged to know where and how I was situated, which I informed him, simply, in a very few words.

“ In the city, with a grub of a citizen, and an ignorant wife from the wilds of Kent,” said his Lordship, “ daughter to the good woman you called mother ; poor little girl, it must be a confounded life ; but rely on my friendship — I feel prodigiously interested. Let us see, it must be near six years since you left us to go to Arran-Vale, and now you cannot be above sixteen, or seventeen.”

“ Near nineteen, my Lord,” I said.——

“ Really, well, I know you were very small at that time, but a most wonderfully accomplished little creature. My poor little sister, you remember, was excessively fond of you. She used to say you were quite a prodigy for abilities, and I hope to see you shine yet ; you may rely on my calling, and very soon.”

I thanked his Lordship for his condescension, and, handing me into the coach, I bade him adieu, and was with my city friends just in time for dinner. Lord Danbury's mention of his sister dwelt deeply on my mind, the memory, of that most amiable and unhappy Lady was ever sacred with me, and it was not without the greatest difficulty I could command my tears during our repast, while Mr. Jefferies paid me his usual friendly attention, and Mrs. Jefferies was busily engrossed by the duties of her table, and sparing with her husband; toward me her behaviour was fullen silence, which she has lately observed with very little interruption.

Observing my heart ready to burst, Mr. Jefferies inquired if I was sick, or if any thing particular had happened to make me so sorrowful: I said, that I had met with Lord Danbury by chance (but did not think it necessary to mention my having called at his house) and that his recalling to my mind the goodness of his sister, had thus affected me."

me."—Ay, it is right that people should be grateful!" vociferated Mrs. Jefferies; "but there is but little of it in the world."—"I hope, Madam," said I, "it will never be said, with justice, that I am otherwise."—"I do not believe it will, Miss Iphy," said Mr. Jefferies, with great apparent good-nature. I paused some moments, and then said, "I hoped I had not taken too great a liberty in giving Lord Danbury my address there." A sparkle of satisfaction, in the eyes of Mrs. Jefferies, fully informed me of her sentiments on that subject, and she replied, with a pleasant smile, which was what I had not lately been honored with from her.—"Lord, no, not in the least; he shall be made as welcome as if he was in a nobleman's house, and more so too, perhaps. I will do my very best to entertain him."—"You are very good, Madam," said I; "but his Lordship is only coming to inquire in what manner he can be most serviceable to me, and he is so kind as to say he shall find a pleasure in being my friend."—"I do not in the least doubt

it," said Mr. Jefferies, with an archness of look and manner for which I could not account: "I do not in the least doubt it," he repeated. "His Lordship was the friend and protector of my childhood; you have, perhaps, heard," I added.—"Yes," replied Mr. Jefferies, "and is now so good as to undertake the protection of your riper years. — Well, Miss Iphy, if you think well of it, it is all well, and his Lordship shall be made as welcome as a London citizen can make him, who, though but a tradesman, has a purse as well lined with guineas, perhaps, as his Lordship's." These words were uttered with a kind of pique, for which I could by no means account, and I contented myself with saying, good humouredly, "A great deal better, perhaps, Mr. Jefferies."—"Perhaps so too," returned he, furlily, "though I am not one of the quality." He scarcely opened his lips again, but soon withdrew to his business, while Mrs. Jefferies chatted with uncommon vivacity; and I found, by repeated experience, that what was pleasing

to one of these good people, was sure to disconcert the other; to which strange inconsistency I solely attributed the chagrin evinced by Mr. Jefferies.

The day concluded in the usual manner. I passed the evening in my own chamber; Mrs. Jefferies had a card-party, and Mr. Jefferies went to the club, or elsewhere, to find that happiness to his taste, which he declared was not to be found in his own family.

The very next morning I had a visit from Lord Danbury; Mrs. Jefferies was present all the time, and her attentions to his Lordship were by him evidently deemed impertinently officious. The little notice he took of her seemed at first to pique her vanity; but he made his peace abundantly with her before he left us. Happening to mention public places, his Lordship inquired if I had ever seen an opera.—“Never,” was my reply.—“Nor a masque—nor Ranelagh—nor ———?”—“She was never at any thing but

but Astley's, and the play, with Mr. Jefferies and me," interrupted our now loquacious entertainer.

"Really! that is shameful!" exclaimed the amazed Peer. What! did the Worthington's never bring you to town?"—"I never desired it, my Lord," I replied, in great sincerity of heart. — "Mr. Worthington's family you know is a very recluse one, and I always loved solitude."—"You loved!" said his Lordship, laughing; "I believe you hardly know what you love yet; but, I think, if you saw a little more of the world, you would like these sweet amusements."

"So I tell her, my Lord," cried Mrs. Jefferies; "I know I do."—"To be sure," rejoined her gallant visitor, "and I am sure your taste ought to be a standard; I can answer for its being a very elegant one, and really, Madam, you should take pity on this little wood-nymph; you should try to initiate her in the ways of modern life; for she
might

might as well have been in a convent as where she has been for some years past." Mrs. Jefferies simpered with all the pride of self-applause, and conscious superiority over me, and told his Lordship, that, indeed, she had done her best; but that I seemed to have no great opinion of her judgment, and, she believed, would follow my own ways.—“But she positively shall go to a few public places,” said his Lordship, “and see a little of the world; and for that purpose I shall do my best to oblige both her and yourself, Madam,” bowing to Mrs. Jefferies, who now was as much elevated and delighted by the noble Peer’s attention and politeness, as she had been before depressed and piqued by his neglect. Her vivacity became unbounded—she exhibited herself in a light so ridiculous as made me blush; but was productive of high entertainment to Lord Danbury, who, after amusing himself a short time at her expence, and laughing (with an appearance of admiration highly soothing to her vanity) at her absurdities, he took his leave, saying he should do
himself

himself the pleasure of seeing us again soon, and, whispering me, ere he arose to depart, that the wish of seeing me more eligibly settled lay heavy at his heart, as he felt extremely for my then situation; but, I might rest assured, it should only be of short duration, as he felt a most lively and sincere interest in my happiness, of which he soon hoped to convince me. My heart glowed with gratitude toward his Lordship. Mrs. Jefferies was flattered into perfect good humour with herself and me, repeated at dinner the complimentary speeches lavished on her by his Lordship; that he had pronounced her a perfect standard of taste and elegance, and wished she could follow his Lordship's advice, and initiate me a little, only to make me dress, look, act, and think, like other people; but Mr. Jefferies interrupted her with—"Why did not you tell the finikin puppy of a Lord, that we have follies enough without his bringing us a fresh stock? Why did not you advise him to keep his St. James's gambols to himself? I would, if I had

had been there, for they do not at all suit my shop."—"Law! Mr. Jefferies," said his astonished lady, "you get worse and worse, why, you would not affront a Lord, would you?"—"As soon as not," was the sullen reply, "and what is more," after a pause, "I will too, tell him a bit of my mind, if he comes here with his new-fangled whims, stuffing up your head with nonsense, more than it was before." I expressed my concern at being the occasion of this dissatisfaction; but I was scarcely heard, and not at all regarded; a clamorous altercation, in the usual style, commenced, and I retired ere it had subsided.

His lordship shewed that he was not unmindful of us; the next morning brought us tickets for a new opera, with a card to Mrs. Jefferies. Conscious, however, that I had innocently aggravated the infelicity of that unhappy pair, I resolved that I would never risque its being more embittered by any fault of mine, and therefore declared my
resolution

resolution of not going to the opera, and my wish that the tickets might be returned, as these were not the proofs of friendship I hoped or expected from Lord Danbury. To give me a taste for fashionable levities, and expensive amusements, were not the services I sought, nor to imbibe it at all suited to the humble rank allotted me by Providence : I was therefore rather hurt than gratified by this attention of that nobleman's. My behaviour on this occasion brought a heavy charge of ingratitude from Mrs. Jefferies : I was resolved not to be happy, though every body strove to make me so ; such strange perverseness ; she had no patience, but should not affront his Lordship on account of my airs, and, if I did not chuse to go, others would ; I might stay at home, and drink flip, if I chose it, with Mr. Jefferies, or play at put, and she would send for Miss Jenny Oliver, the baker's daughter, to go with her to the opera, who would be glad enough to accompany her.

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The coarseness of her wit irritated me extremely—the idea of staying at home to drink flip (a horrible sort of compound) with Mr. Jefferies, was what I could ill brook: However, I repressed the anger it excited, and replied, “that in staying at home I must intreat to be indulged, without any intention of either playing at cards, or drinking flip, to both of which she knew I had an aversion.”

“I do not know to what it is you have not,” she said, rudely, and, flinging herself out of the room, I saw her no more till dinner brought, as usual, its scene of contention. Mr. Jefferies absolutely refused to attend her to the opera, applauded me, forbad her going, and insisted on the tickets being returned; but his commands found their accustomed obedience. The Lady declared he might be as absurd as he pleased, but she would most certainly go. I retired to the nursery as soon as dinner was removed. Mrs. Jefferies was faithful to her word. Miss Jenny Oliver was her delighted companion, and I beheld them, dressed in the first style
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of elegance, according to their ideas, jump into the hackney-coach that waited to convey them to the place of amusement.

In less than an hour after they were gone, Mr. Jefferies sent up a message, requesting to be favored with my company in the dining room. I obeyed the summons with reluctance, as I was deeply and pleasingly engaged in reading the Novel of Cecilia, which I had never before seen.

“I cannot go out to-night,” said Mr. Jefferies, as soon as I entered, “and so, Miss Iphy, being quite dull by myself, I sent to desire you would come and sit a bit with me.” I told him, I feared, I should be but an unentertaining companion; in truth, I was little pleased at being forced from my favorite amusement, and compelled to be the associate of his stupid moments.

“Why, to be sure,” said he, “you do look a little *malancholy*; but what signifies fretting

fretting and fuming; do not despair, for let the world wag as it will, you shall always find a friend in me, though I be only a tradesman, and not a Lord." During this speech I had seated myself in a chair, and unfolded some work; but the word Lord, pronounced with peculiar emphasis, brought a glow in my cheeks, and I looked in Mr. Jefferies's face for his meaning of what these words, spoken as they were, were intended to imply.

"Why, to be sure, Miss Iphy," said the cit, with a look of profound sagacity, "I have no cause to meddle; but I can see into a mill-stone as well as another, let him be who he will, and I will tell you a bit of my mind now we have got a bit of time by ourselves:

Jobson Jefferies has not lived forty years in the world for nothing, and I will whisper a word in your ear," drawing his chair nearer to mine. "I am sorry you made an acquaintance with that frippery Lord." —

"What

"What, Lord Danbury!" said I, in great surprise, and some agitation.—"Yes, the same," replied my companion, "and I will tell you my plain mind of the matter, now we are by ourselves. I know his scheme, and so to be sure do you."—"Scheme! Mr. Jefferies, I said, "what scheme?"—"Why, his Lordship's.—Pho, do not make so strange.—To be sure you are a fine girl, a beautiful girl, a genteel, egad, and, altogether, quite an angel!" I folded up my work, and rising, hastily, said, "Sir, if this is the manner you mean to entertain me, excuse me, if I retire."

"No, no, no, upon my soul, do not be in a passion, I vow and swear, I mean no offence in the world," forcibly reseating me. "I declare, Miss Iphy, nothing was farther from my thoughts than to affront you: I wish to do you a good turn, as the saying is, and about this Lord, for he runs plaguily in my head, and I do not doubt but what you know his meaning before now."—"I
certainly

certainly do," I said; "his meaning is to place me under the protection of some worthy family, where I may be happy; in his own (where I passed some of the most blissful hours of my childhood) he knows I cannot be received, for his Lady is of a most haughty and peculiar temper."

"Hum, she *must* rather be of a peculiar temper, if she would wink at your living there, indeed!" cried Mr. Jefferies, laughing. I felt extremely offended at the strange ambiguity of his manner, and begged him to explain his mystery, if any there was. — "Yes, Miss Iphy, there is a mystery," he said; "I cannot say but what there is; but you seem determined to be as blind to it, as, you would persuade me, you are to that of Lord Danbury, who certainly does not look at them pretty eyes, and that lovely shape, without thinking it a great pity you should go to watch the humors of some ugly old Dowager, and resolving, if possible, to prevent it, and make you what you ought to be—a fine Lady."

"But

“ But I will tell you what,” he resumed, for, indeed, I was too much astonished to offer again to interrupt him, and was now resolved to hear all he had to say, “ if you do not mind it will prove all a bite ; the fine promises of fine Lords often end all in air ; he will gull you, I would lay my life, and then what will become of you ? After flaunting about a little, the shew will be over, and all the town will know who and what you are. If I might advise, a good warm cit would be fifty times better, where it would be a snug business, nobody the wiser, money in plenty, and he would take care of your character for the sake of his own, besides providing for you as long as you live, and a ——.” — “ I will hear no more of insult !” I exclaimed, starting from my seat, and bursting into tears. — “ How have I deserved this from you ? It is false ! Lord Danbury is a man of honor ; for, though gay, I never heard he was a villain. Your base suspicions wrong him, and cruelly wound me ; although from my soul I scorn them, and will no longer be obliged to their
their

their unfeeling and illiberal suggestor." — With these words I quitted the room, leaving the amazed grocer to wonder and ruminate at leisure.

In the interest, which my heart took in the story of Cecilia, I endeavored to forget the indignities I had experienced from Mr. Jefferies, but in vain; they dwelt forcibly upon my mind, and, throwing aside the book, I sat indulging the gloomy images that arose before me, when a loud rapping at the door awakened me from my sad reverie, and announced the return of Mrs. Jefferies. — Lord Danbury had very gallantly attended the Ladies home, and I was summoned to appear. Fortunately for my feelings, Mr. Jefferies had previously retired to rest. His Lordship rallied me severely on my perverseness, as he was pleased to term it. I smiled, and was silent, while my heart was bursting with anguish, from the sharp sense of the insult I had received from Mr. Jefferies.

The ladies were lavish in their admiration of the entertainment they had witnessed, but of which I knew they were not qualified to judge : His Lordship's looks testified the same conviction, with an expression of contempt and pity of their affectation and ignorance, the latter of which was rendered glaringly conspicuous by the former, and both united to render them objects of derision and disgust. "Heavens! what a contrast!" whispered his Lordship, leaning over the arm of the sofa, and, speaking to me in a half whisper, while our companions were engaged in a critical dispute about the merits of Mara, to whose enchanting powers they were, in fact, both equally insensible.—"What foils are here to native beauty, wit, elegance, and every finished grace, unconscious of their irresistible charm, their inestimable worth, and, heightened by simplicity, the most bewitching!" This propensity to flatter indiscriminately, is what I most disapprove in the manners of Lord Danbury ; it casts a shade, in my opinion, over his many amiable and
engaging

engaging qualities, and I regret the foible, because I wish my friends to be as perfect as mortality will admit; but as this talent of his Lordship's is, I observe, undistinguishingly applied to every female he approaches, in some form or degree, I cannot be offended or surpris'd that I came in for my share, and can only lament, that he will persist in such an unmeaning waste of words, which, as I now became accustomed to this his foible, I am the less distressed by."

"But why," added that nobleman, less gayly, "why, sweet Iphigenia, will you turn averse from the voice of pleasure in its most guileless form? Why despise innocent and rational amusement?"

"Because, my Lord," I replied, "amusement, in any shape, is joyless and wearisome to me, while in this uncertain and unprotected, not to say very irksome, state. Thus friendless, thus alone, I may add, in the world, sensibility must be a stranger to my
G 2 heart

heart could I taste of pleasure." His Lordship seemed to feel the truth and force of what I said, and, with a seriousness I have seldom seen in him, assured me, that he would steadily endeavour to obtain me a protection, such as I expressed a wish for. "There is a Lady," said he, "a most worthy being, single, independant, unrestrained, sensible and refined, a woman of fashion and elegance, and mistress of a genteel sufficiency, but singular in her love of retirement, that would, I think, rejoice in such an acquisition. I have heard her express a wish for a companion like yourself, but it never occurred to me till this day. I will wait on her, and mention you, and will no more press your sharing in amusements to which I see you are so much disinclined; but which, I hoped, might be a means of raising your spirits."

I blushed at the recollection of the rudeness I had experienced from Mr. Jefferies, and his injustice to this amiable nobleman, the intrinsic value of whose worth rises in
my

my estimation every time I converse with him, and, by his generous and friendly efforts, I hope soon to be emancipated from my present insupportable dependance.

So great was my reluctance to meet Mr. Jefferies, after the treatment I had received, that I alledged a violent head-ach, which, indeed, I felt, as an excuse for not appearing at breakfast this morning. Mrs. Jefferies joined me as soon as it was over, in my own room. I was writing when she entered. She appeared in one of her best tempers, begged pardon for interrupting my studies, as she termed the employment she found me engaged in, and began again expatiating on the charms of the opera, decided with an air of judgment and consequence on the merits of the different performers, although actually incapable of distinguishing the harmony of sounds, and then launched out in the praise of Lord Danbury, on whose person, understanding, and manners, she was profuse of panegyric, which chiefly engrossed the hours,

till a summons to dinner gave a cessation to her tongue, and relieved me from the necessity of listening wholly to its jargon. Mr. Jefferies affected, with good policy, to have forgotten what did him so little honor, his conduct of the preceding evening, and behaved toward me with his accustomed ease and cordiality : I endeavoured to imitate his example ; but I am not, thank heaven, an adept in deceit.

Adieu ! my loved friend ; I trust my next will convey to you the intelligence of my being more happily situated ; and that, though far removed from those most dear to my soul, that I am likewise removed from the painful penance of insolent vulgarity, which inflicts unheeded wounds upon the feeling mind, when bending beneath the pressure of misfortune ! Farewell, gratefully and tenderly farewell ; and, amidst all the diversities of life, forget not

IPHIGENIA.

LETTER

LETTER XII.

MY wishes, and the kind efforts of Lord Danbury, are crowned with success, and I am now as content as I can ever expect to be, while absent from the loved companions of my happiest days.

Soon after I concluded my last to you, his Lordship repeated his visit at the house of Mr. Jefferies ; the interest he takes in my affairs, the generous concern he expresses for my misfortunes, and that gratitude, which the protection I for years experienced from himself and amiable sister, in my helpless childhood, these claims, all conspire to justify my reliance on him, of which I am satisfied I shall never have cause to repent. He informed me, that he had seen the Lady mentioned at our former interview ; that she

was highly pleased with his description of me, having long wished to find a well-educated and well-disposed young person, in all respects a gentlewoman, whom she could consider as a friend, was anxious to see me, and would, his Lordship doubted not, receive me without delay under her protection. He informed me minutely of her situation and circumstances; that she was the widow of a military commander, who fell in the service of a foreign Prince, and since that lamented period, this Lady had been almost inconsolable; that, though far advanced in life, she was still a fine woman, and that her heart and temper excelled any eulogium he could bestow; of sentiments so noble, of a taste so just and elegant, a heart so humane, and possessed of feelings, which must, he was pleased to say, make her love and value such a companion as myself, to enliven and enhance the beauties of her pleasing solitude. I received this welcome intelligence with thankful joy, and, after a communication of it to Mr. and Mrs. Jefferies, who both heard the account with

with a gloomy silence, for which I could not assign a cause, and about which I was little solicitous, I hastened to prepare, and accompany his Lordship to wait on the Lady, in whom I hoped to find a future friend; to whose residence his carriage soon conveyed us, and who then inhabited ready furnished lodgings in a genteel street at the west end of the town; a mode of living, which, his Lordship informed me, was occasioned by the unfrequency of her visits to London, where nothing but the necessity of business could ever attract her. During our ride his Lordship assured me, in the most friendly and polite terms, that so sincere was his wish to promote my felicity, that he must ever consider it in a degree essential to his own; and blest should he have esteemed himself, if under his roof, and in his Lady, I could have found such a protection as he now hoped to secure me; but that was a happiness for which he sighed in vain. Lady Danbury, he said, is of so unfortunate a disposition, as to preclude all hopes of domestic comfort,

or rational enjoyment, from herself, him, or any with whom she is connected. Interest, not affection, he added, with a look and voice of sadness, was the tie between them at first, and each succeeding day had increased their mutual dissatisfaction.

Now, he continued, although they frequently inhabited the same house, though no formal separation had ever taken place, they were, in fact, strangers to each other: Seldom met but in public, and then with mere cold common politeness, and perfect indifference.

“Lady Danbury was beautiful,” he continued, “nay, is still so; but what is beauty without a mind? and she has none. I look for sensibility, for sense, for sweetness of temper, affections tremblingly alive, a heart warm and tender, a being such as I formed a model of within my own mind, but almost despaired of ever seeing realized. The attachment of such a soul, the love of such a creature, would,

would, indeed, be bliss almost too exalted for mortality ! and when united to all these mental perfections, we find a perfect form, where exquisite proportion, grace and harmony, combine ; a face, the fairest copy of excellent nature, where reigns expression such as captivates the soul, and spreads a soft enchantment over the senses, who can, who would, indeed, wish to resist a charm so all subduing ! This was the felicity I once hoped for, I ever sighed for, in a matrimonial state ; but sighed in vain : How sad is the reverse of what I experience !

“ But pardon me, Iphigenia,” added his Lordship, “ for thus obtruding my secret troubles on you, who have, doubtless, enough of your own : I only meant to assure you of my esteem, my friendship, my wish, to promote your real welfare, my hope that you will confide in me, rely on the sincerity of my regard, and suffer me to serve you as far as I am empowered, to prove how truly I

am interested in your happiness, and success through life."

I thanked this amiable nobleman, with tears of unfeigned gratitude, blended with concern for his domestic sorrows, worthy, as I am sure he is, of every earthly good, and the carriage stopped at our place of destination. An universal tremor seized me as I entered the house, my native timidity seemed unusually predominant, and, unaccustomed to such interviews as that I was about to experience, an embarrassment superior to what I had ever felt overwhelmed me, as Lord Danbury presented me to the Lady in whose favor I was so strongly impressed. She is a tall, elegant woman, I imagine near sixty, and her form and features still retain the vestiges of beauty that must have been eminent. She received me with the most flattering affability; her looks bore testimony to the approbation she expressed: I should be the friend, the companion of her heart, she said, her adopted daughter; and
if

if she appeared satisfied with me, no less was I pleased, nay, delighted with her. She informed me, that taste and misfortune had conspired to render her by choice a recluse; that the indispensable adjustment of some important affairs, could alone enforce her visits to the capital; that she had a little cottage which some called elegant; but which was certainly most charmingly situated in one of the most beautiful spots this isle can boast. Her continuance in town would not, she hoped, exceed another week, the tediousness of which would, she flattered herself, be forgotten in my society. My heart was too full to express half the grateful joy I felt; it was fixed that I should enter on my new situation the following day, and, after two hours passed in the most agreeable manner, Lord Danbury conducted me back to the house of Mr. Jefferies, to which (it cheered my spirits to be assured) I was so soon to bid adieu. When in the presence of his Lordship, I informed Mr. and Mrs. Jefferies of the protection that nobleman had procured
me,

me, and spoke my sense of the advantage and felicity I expected to derive from it, expressing, at the same time, my thanks for their civilities; the cloud that had before hung on both their brows became more dark, and, unable as I was to solve the mystery of their evident displeasure, on a subject which I had not doubted would afford them mutual satisfaction, I left it for time to unfold; and, after Lord Danbury took his leave, the rest of the day was busied by me in preparing for my departure; and the following noon saw me happy, at least easy, and gratefully content, in my new residence.

My parting with Mr. and Mrs. Jefferies was by no means so cordial as I could have wished; but, as my heart acquitted me of ever having merited from either of them coldness or resentment, their behaviour gave me but little concern. I informed them of every particular relative to my new situation, that candor, gratitude, or friendship, could demand, and promised to see them again
previous

previous to my departure for the country, and let them know whether my new situation equalled what I expected.

I find in my new protectress all I could reasonably have hoped, and nearly all my enthusiastic imagination had depicted her. Gentle, affectionate, and easy to please, it would be almost impious were I to murmur, and I cannot but esteem myself fortunate, altho' there is an air of reserve sometimes about her, which I could wish diminished, and which produces a restraint on my part rather painful ; but this reserve does not appear to be the effects of pride or ill-humour ; but I attribute it to the bent of nature, or rather to the gloom of misfortune, which had diffused a silent sadness over her manners, sometimes unconquerable ; an opinion, which hourly observation confirms, and which adds force to the attachment her goodness claims, and creates the most tender interest, united with the most lively gratitude in my heart toward her : That her conversation is not
more

more open and extensive, I regret; but governed by the conviction I have already expressed, I trace it to the source of many sorrows, over which, though time and silence may have thrown a veil, the memory is yet recent in her mind, the wound, perhaps, incurable, and her spirits the sacrifice. Be it my care, then, in return for the almost maternal regard, the generous tenderness she evinces for me, to sooth the secret woes of this amiable mourner, to speak comfort to her unconquerable dejection, to endeavor to soften the agonizing sense of past misfortunes, and irradiate, as much as can be, the evening of her life.

During our continuance in town, which rather exceeded the time at first mentioned, Lord Danbury was our daily visitor, and every time we conversed together gave me a higher opinion of the goodness of his heart, ever ready to pity the sufferer of all descriptions, and relieve their afflictions. He was the only person, of her own rank, I was informed

formed by my kind Mrs. Leopald, who knew of her being in town, as she wished not ever again to be obliged to mingle with the gay and fashionable world, with the fallacy of whose pursuits, pleasures, and friendships, she says, she is so well acquainted. In Lord Danbury, she never fails to point out an exception to all that is faulty ; from early youth she has known him, and declares, that she has narrowly marked his progress through life, with an approbation, uninterrupted, but by his unfortunate selection of his Lady ; and there, she adds, he was influenced by the most laudable motive, the wish of obeying the dying request of a father, whose mistaken fondness marked out that Lady the object of his choice, in their very early years, because she was a rich and noble heiress, and the family fortune and consequence, would be every way greatly augmented by the alliance. His acquiescence in that point, Mrs. Leopald pronounces his Lordship's sole error ; and, having traced even that to so amiable a source as filial obedience, it can hardly be said

said to merit so harsh an epithet. His Lordship's character certainly appeared each hour more faultless in my estimation, and I considered him as one of the most perfect of human beings.

The day previous to our quitting town, I called, as I had promised, on Mr. and Mrs. Jefferies. Cold contempt was visible in all their behaviour, but I appeared, or at least endeavored to appear, neither to observe nor feel the unkindness for which I could not account; but telling the latter that I should take the liberty of writing to her from the country, as I flattered myself she was not totally indifferent about my future welfare, I pressed the little Maria to my heart, with tears of affection, the lovely child returned my caresses with all that native sensibility which so endeared her to my soul; and transcribing the address to Mrs. Leopald's retreat, which Lord Danbury had marked down in my pocket-book, I gave it to Mrs. Jefferies, and arrived the third day following, after a
most

most delightful journey, at the cottage of the Cliffs, the name of Mrs. Leopald's enchanting solitude.

This sweet abode does justice to the picture which my imagination had previously drawn from the descriptive talent of Lord Danbury. It is situated on the brow of a romantic eminence near the sea, and commands a prospect, at once grand, extensive and variegated. Swelling lawns, waving corn fields, and shady groves, with all the beauties of cultivation, are charmingly contrasted by bold cliffs that overhang the ocean, where the sea-birds scream, and the foaming waters roar, while, at no great distance, nature forms the rushing water-fall, and winds the murmuring rivulet; and thither the neighbouring swains conduct their herds, to crop the fragrant herbage, and slake their thirst at the stream.

Ah! scenes, formed for innocence, and calm repose, how oft do I, with grateful heart,

heart, hail your soft shades, and wander, pleased, through all your bleakest wilds? How have I sat upon the sea-beach, and listened to the beating billows, while gulls and bitterns flew around, and commerce wasted innumerable sails within my view? In those moments of innocent and tranquil luxury, my soul wished for the friends of my dearest choice, to participate the pleasures of the scene, and I dropt many a tear to the recollection of my Isabella.

Mrs. Leopald is seldom the companion of my rambles; indeed, I cannot but observe, that she seems to enjoy solitude much less than I expected. The hours appear to hang rather heavily upon her hands, and she derives her principal amusement from continually adding to the decorations of her retirement. Her cottage is such, in truth, a small thatched building, but furnished with all the elegance that simplicity will admit. Here is a neat library well stocked with Novels, of which Mrs. Leopald is extravagantly fond: Indeed,

to

to my frequent surprise, she never evinces a taste for any other species of reading; nor can I allow her selection of Novels to be always unexceptionable: The pen of pure and edifying morality I can but seldom trace; love, romance, and laughable anecdote, enliven the present moment, and are the most distinguished. But this I likewise attribute to the deep sense of past ills in the mind of Mrs. Leopald: I conclude, that her spirits must have been too cruelly oppressed to admit now of more serious pursuits; that the author that produced more reflection might carry back her thoughts to images, which it is both her duty and interest to forget; that merely to amuse is now the sole object of her reading, and, as she is affectionate, obliging, and attentive, to every wish I express, I judge it my part to seem blind to any little peculiarity of taste or temper, that I may observe, and convinced, that in mortality is no perfection, and that to suffer is the lot, and to endeavor to alleviate that lot the duty, of all, I exert my utmost powers

to

to sooth her oft perturbed mind, and cheer her hours; and have every reason to congratulate myself on my apparent success, and the increasing attachment of my protectress.

Adjoining the cottage is a garden laid out with some taste, and abounding with all that is useful; at the bottom of it is a fish-pond, well stocked, and beyond it, an orchard, whose trees are now covered with fragrant blossom, and promise a plentiful harvest. There I pass some of my happiest hours; there I often hail the rising-sun, and, from a terrace, by which the garden is on one side inclosed, I frequently behold that glorious luminary sink, apparently, into the bosom of the deep! But still the loss of my Isabella, and of our friend, the most amiable of mankind, from whom I am now, most probably, for ever separated, and of whom I hear no intelligence, oft steals across my mind, and casts a gloomy shade over the most pleasing scene.

A

A fortnight has now passed in this manner, with grateful contentment, as perfect, as I can ever hope to taste, on my part, and visible satisfaction on that of Mrs. Leopald, as far as I am concerned; but secret ennui stills seems to prey upon her heart, arising, I know, from a confirmed lowness of spirits, a disorder of the nerves, produced, she informs me, by a long series of various ills, fatal to her peace and health, and nearly to her life; but on the subject of those ills, she always says she is incapable of enlarging; the mention of them afflicts her too deeply; to describe the nature of them she is much unequal, and that they have existed as all I can learn. Lord Danbury is her almost constant theme—the addition of his pleasing society, her daily wish. On our starting in town, he assured us of an early visit, and I am no less desirous than Mrs. Leopald of the performance of that promise.

May heaven ever protect and bless my most dear friend, the worth of whose tender esteem,

esteem, and goodness, no time nor absence
can efface from the heart of her

IPHIGENIA.

L E T T E R XIII.

WHAT an abyss of destruction have I
escaped! A Power, whose eye
searches the heart, and whose goodness ex-
ceeds our utmost thought, has snatched me
from a fate, otherwise inevitable, and secured
my innocence, although deprived of almost
every other earthly blessing.

The third week of my residence at the
Cottage of the Cliffs, brought the oft-wished
for presence of Lord Danbury. Mrs. Leopald
welcomed him with a joy bordering on rap-
ture, while my bosom glowed with all the
sincerity

sincerity of friendship, and all the warmth of gratitude: His Lordship seemed both pleased and affected at again beholding us, and our satisfaction appeared all equally generous and animated. The day passed delightfully; his Lordship amused us with many anecdotes of the town, envied our elegant solitude, as he termed it, and wished it were possible to share our tranquil bliss. After tea, his Lordship proposed a walk, but Mrs. Leopald was rather reluctant; indeed, she was indisposed, and, after conversing some time, with infinite pleasure on my part, the mention of something, which Lord Danbury said he was commissioned to impart to Mrs. Leopald, relative to her affairs, made me conclude, that my absence for a short time would not be disagreeable, and, putting on my hat and cloak, I strolled into the garden. The evening was fine: I ascended the terrace, and contemplated the prospect around me, when, as I stood admiring the singular beauty of the landscape, an aged peasant hastily approached the spot where I stood;

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but

but, not venturing quite close, she respectfully beckoned me toward her, and shewed a paper, which she held in her hand. The singularity of her appearance and manner awakened my curiosity, although neat in the extreme, her garb was that of poverty. I hesitated, but, judging that she wanted to impart to me some tale of distress, which I might be enabled to relieve, and the nature of which might require the air of secrecy she assumed, I descended the terrace, and she put into my hand the paper containing these words : " Follow the bearer, if you would avoid inevitable perdition ! " I started ! amazement chilled my heart, and scarcely could I keep myself from falling to the ground.

Perdition !—inevitable perdition !—what could it import ? How could perdition reach me under the guardianship of disinterested and faithful friendship ? A variety of images arose in my mind, an event so extraordinary could not originate from " airy nothing ; " it could

could not be without a meaning, perhaps a meaning on which my future peace depended; awhile I stood tremulous, and doubting how to act. The villager's countenance spoke an ingenuous and a feeling heart, and, I believe, influenced my determination more than any other circumstance: She looked like the messenger of gentle, unaffected goodness, was evidently interested in my decision, and betrayed a kind of benevolent anxiety, fear, and impatience, and, bidding her lead the way, I resolved to follow her guidance. — Her visible apprehensions seemed to give wings to her speed, and, in rather more than half an hour, we arrived at a poor hovel, in an unfrequented valley, where my conductress entered, and I traced her footsteps. A female figure, young, lovely, but pale, emaciated, and in the most alarming agitation, arose to welcome us: Her fine dark eyes expressed the most violent emotions; she was silent; but, clasping my hands, she bedewed them with tears, and a gleam of joy, the moment she beheld me, illumed her pallid aspect,

aspect, and gave a spirit to features which sorrow and illness had changed, while the whole expression of her countenance convinced me, that she possessed a soul replete with sensibility, and a mind distinguished by no common endowments. As soon as she had relieved her heart by tears, "Heaven," said she, "has spared you to my prayers! You are snatched from destruction! and who can imagine my gratitude, my joy? Your doom was fixed—you were assuredly devoted another victim to insatiate vice, to the cruel, the perfidious Danbury! that monster of iniquity and guilt!" My emotions exceeded all utterance, and the charming, interesting stranger thus proceeded:

"Had you been self secure, you had been lost! Had you disregarded this effort to preserve you, what but the immediate arm of heaven itself could have effected your rescue? But my unhappy fate is rendered the means of warding off the evil designed for you, and is thereby become an instrument of good."

Think

Think not of returning to that abode of guilt, she continued, 'after a pause; but be grateful to Him, through whose mercy you are in safety and innocence; of which, had not his goodness thus timely interposed, this, this, had been, perhaps, the last hour!' — "Mine," she added, with a deep and agonizing sigh, "was a severer destiny. Oh! Sedmore, dear, generous, noble, inestimable, Sedmore! how is thy loved, thy wretched, Anna torn from thy arms for ever!"

Truth and beneficence were marked on her features: My feelings bore testimony to her veracity, and my heart blessed her goodness. The poignancy of her emotions overcame her strength, and successive faintings ensued. Grief, pity, and alarm, seized me, as I witnessed her sufferings, which, from their violence, I concluded must assuredly be the last pangs of expiring nature; but the good old cottager soothed my fears, and, taking her gently in her arms, she laid her on a small and humble, but neat, pallet bed, where I

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seated

seated myself beside her, and she soon began to recover. The interesting, though faded beauty of her person, and the elegance and sweetness of her manners, were such, as could hardly fail to impress all who beheld them in her favor, and I already felt affection, uniting with gratitude and compassion, in my heart toward her. That night I shared her lowly pallet, her slumbers were disturbed by the images that dwelt most deeply on her mind: Frequently she started from her pillow, uttered loud and piercing shrieks, called repeatedly upon the name of Sedmore, implored heaven to protect him, to shield him from every ill, to conduct him once more to her, and again she sunk into forgetfulness.

The next morning, the agitation of her spirits was considerably abated: Her fears on my account were subsided; but she was low and languid, and her cheeks were evermore bathed with tears, which she told me were her only, though sad relief.

Toward

Toward the middle of the day, the good old rustic was called from us, by some necessary avocations, and the gentle mourner thus addressed me : “ That I have been empowered to shield you from the worst of ills, the bitterest of sorrows, seems to impart a milder aspect to my own hard lot, will smooth the brow of death, and soften the rigor of my destiny. You yet may soothe the woes of my adored husband, when I am no more. You may whisper peace to the best of hearts, may heal the bleeding wounds which the inevitable loss of his Anna will, I know, occasion, and prove a ministering angel to lead him to resignation; it is an office for which heaven seems peculiarly to have designed you. Sedmore will claim your pity; he is worthy, greatly worthy of your esteem; and, perhaps, at some future time, he may trace the sad particulars of her earlier misfortunes, in whose present sufferings you thus generously sympathize, and who, if the most faithful love, the most unshaken constancy, doomed the guiltless prey of blackest villainy,

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can

can claim compassion and sympathy, is, assuredly, no unworthy object.

I have a husband ! a tender, an amiable, a worthy husband. Affection, the most pure and disinterested, united us ; we were all the world to each other. My Sedmore had drank deep of misfortune, the generosity of his nature had involved him in innumerable perplexities, his noble heart was ever open to redress the aggrieved, and cheer the sorrowing of all descriptions, and his lavish hand readily obeyed its impulses ; to be unfortunate, or afflicted, was a sufficient claim upon his feelings. Thus passed his early years, in doing good to others ; but in impoverishing himself, till chill penury enveloped him, and deprived him of every gratification in which his soul most delighted. He had been renowned and rich : He had been numbered among the successful defenders of his country ; but the happy fruits of that success was not lasting ; the liberality of his heart perpetually misled him, and had doomed
ed

ed him to encounter many difficulties, ere chance introduced me to his acquaintance. The first day created a gentle sympathy between us; nature formed our souls to love each other. I had never beheld a man so amiable, so perfectly calculated to attach my heart, and he declared me necessary to his happiness. My situation was peculiar—my story was sad—I intrusted him with both—his affection increased with my confidence—he snatched me from the evils that surrounded me, and made me his own. We thought ourselves blest. Heaven never smiled upon a happier pair. Ah! bliss too perfect to be unallayed! A train of misfortunes ensued: Sedmore was not born to be prudent, or, in other words, selfish. He was bound for a friend, who soon after basely absconded, and his all became the forfeit. Other demands then poured in upon him, and he was forced to fly—to leave me—defenceless—ill—and destitute. It is true, he left me to the care of those he deemed his friends; but those friends were faithless. The suddenness of

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Sedmore's

Sedmore's departure prevented his settling me in any point as he could have wished; but he judged of others by himself, and was satisfied that where he left me I should experience kindness, and be secure of a support: But it turned out just the reverse, incivility, nay insult was my portion; my injured spirits were unable to brook a treatment I little expected, I quitted the family where he had placed me, and was soon reduced to want. Only a few weeks previous to my husband's last misfortune, I had given life to a dear pledge of our fond and true attachment: Heaven had soon recalled the precious gift; that loss I numbered among my greatest misfortunes; it preyed heavily upon my mind; still, when I think of it, a mother's tenderness fills my eyes, and agonizes my heart. The loss of my husband, and of my child, united with absolute want, and the weakness of my frame, reduced me to the borders of the grave, when an accident that, such is the blindness of human nature, I deemed fortunate, introduced me to Mrs. Leopald.

Leopald. She appeared to me, what, doubtless, she has since done to you. She listened to my tale with tears, and I believed her the most amiable of mortals. She told me she had many and powerful friends, by whose interest, she knew, she could liberate my husband from all his perplexities. I heard her with rapture ; my soul blessed her goodness, and she immediately received me under her protection. I was soon made acquainted with Lord Danbury, who was represented in the most favorable colours, and appeared to merit the character ascribed to him by Mrs. Leopald. He cheered me with the hope of soon effecting the return of my loved Sedmore, and advancing his fortune. My heart bounded with gratitude. Alas ! I was born to be the prey of the base ! Mrs. Leopald prevailed on me to accompany her to her cottage, where Lord Danbury assured me he should soon be enabled to bless me with the joyful sounds that my husband was returned in happiness, and of, perhaps, again conducting him to my arms. My tears,

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alone,

alone, could thank him ; but my heart prayed that his efforts might prove successful : Ah ! they were too fatally so ; but little did I then suspect the direful purpose for which those efforts would be exerted. My days were divided between hope, serenity, and tender sadness, at the cottage. Oft would the image of Sedmore start up, and embitter the charms of peaceful tranquillity. I wrote to him, but received no answers to my letters, and am now convinced those letters, which, both from London and that fatal retirement, were entrusted to Mrs. Leopald's servants, who were, I doubt not, devoted to the will of their iniquitous mistress, never reached my husband. Lord Danbury kindly, as I thought, undertook to call for the letters I expected in London ; but he arrived at the cottage with the afflictive intelligence that there was none for me. It was strange ! It was mysterious ! It occasioned many remarks and insinuations, little to the advantage of Sedmore, from his Lordship and Mrs. Leopald ; but the dreadful idea of unkindness, or neglect, from the husband,

husband, to whom I knew myself so dear, and who to me was more than life, was what I could never admit ; yet his silence was terrifying, and involved me almost in despair ; but let me not be tedious in my horrid tale, the destroying fiends had me in their power, and completed my ruin ! They saw the nature of my heart, the fidelity and ardor of my love, the sacredness of my attachment, and judged there was but one way to effect their purpose ; that way was taken ; some lethean drug must have been given me, and I awoke to horror worse than death ! I raved ! I invoked heaven to bless me with forgetfulness ! to relieve me by dissolution ! The villain was amazed at the violence of my grief ! the terrifying anguish of my soul ! He dared to sooth me, to assuage the passion of my sorrow, by promises that only increased it. I bade him avoid me ; but, still persisting, I, in the just rage of my distraction, struck him with a weapon that accidentally lay within my reach, and he fell at my feet. I saw the wound was trifling, although it
had

had deprived him of sense, and, embracing the moment, I resolved on immediate flight. The dæmon of darkness, who had been the prime agent in thus betraying me, was off her guard : The night was dreary and wet ; but, wrapping myself in such cloaths as lay near me, I crept out of the house, and winged my speed as chance directed, until my feet reached the threshold of this cottage. Hither my strength would scarcely bear me, and having feebly crawled to the door, I made an attempt to call, but speech was denied. I sunk down on the turf, and remained there some time in great agonies. At length I was enabled to make an essay to obtain admittance. The good old woman opened the door, and I told her enough to awaken the tenderness of her worthy heart. She led me in, and gave me every succour in her power. I had just time to beg her silence, respecting me, among her rustic neighbours.

Ay,

“ Ay, my Lady !” said she, “ if you stay here a twelvemonth, you shall be welcome, and, by the blessing of God, nobody shall know it. I had a daughter of my own once, and I know what trouble is, and will be a mother to you, to the best of my poor power. I am past work now ; but, thank God, I have more than enough to carry me to my grave, if I should live to be a hundred. I have a pretty bit of land, that lets out for more than maintains me, and my children are all in a better world ; so, young Lady, if you are in trouble, I will be your friend, if you will accept my humble services.”

I blest the good being, and she ~~has~~ been faithful to her word ! I was seized with a shivering fit, ere she had well done speaking, and have been ill ever since. I have wrote to my husband, but, alas ! yet—he is not come : Write, I know he will not ; if he lives to receive mine, he will fly to his dying Anna.” A flood of tears here came to the relief

relief of her oppressed spirits, and she thus proceeded : “ But I will die without adding to my misery the bitter conviction of having wounded, irreparably wounded his peace, of embittering his life with the sharp sense of dishonor, which the source of all purity knows the universe would in vain have tempted me to *merit* ; and of the innocence of my intentions, the spotless chastity of my wedded life, it is only he can judge ; instant death had been mercy to what I endure !

When I heard of Mrs. Leopald’s visit again to the metropolis, I guessed her errand, and besought my faithful cottage friend to watch her return ; but when she told me she had brought a young and lovely woman, in whose countenance beauty and innocence, with a look of sadness, were blended, my heart trembled from rage, and again melted with compassion. Ill as I was, scarcely could I refrain from going to confront that base and wretched woman, and secure, by one bold step, your safety ; but many reasons deterred
me—

me—the peace, perhaps the life of my husband, of whose arrival every day brought the cheering hope. I hesitated, undetermined how to act; for while the base betrayer was not there, I knew there could be no immediate danger; and my gentle-hearted hostess daily watched around the house, to observe if any visitor approached. Ah! little did they judge an enemy so near, fatal to their machinations. At length the smooth smiling deceiver came, the cruel monster came—my messenger saw him arrive—she hovered long about the house in hopes of seeing you, without success—and evening almost brought despair; but I resolved, if she appeared without you, to hasten instantly myself, and, trusting to the motive, submit the event to heaven. Impatience filled my heart, and the painful anxiety and fears I had for many hours experienced, occasioned the agitation of mind and frame in which you found me; my soul welcomed you with gladness, and was thankful to the Almighty!

Life

Life lingers in the hope of once more beholding him I adore—of breathing my last sigh in his fond, his faithful bosom. In him the human virtues all unite : His services will be yours ; they are ever devoted to the innocent and amiable ; he knows no higher bliss."

I mingled my tears with those of the lovely dying mourner ; but my heart was too full for utterance, as it now is to proceed, and must defer the continuation of my sad narrative to a more tranquil moment, as the fleet for India is not yet expected to sail.

Yours, ever,

IPHIGENIA.

LETTER XIV.

THE mistress of the hovel was, by the request of my fair friend, cautiously observant of the transactions at Mrs. Leopald's retirement. That Lady, with her whole family, were busily employed in inquiries and researches after me, which, when fruitless, they concluded, either that I had fallen into the sea, on whose beach I had been known so frequently to wander, or was by some other means the victim of accidental death; unsuspicious as they were of the reality, and conscious that no offence had ever been offered me, the idea of elopement had never crossed their mind, and it afforded me great satisfaction to be assured of the result of their alarm occasioned by my disappearing.

On

On the third day of my being in the lowly cot of the vale, seated beside the lovely Anna, who, while death seemed fast making his awful approach, each moment rose higher in my affection and esteem, the good cottager left us together, to provide us our necessary support, Anna reached down a small packet of papers, sealed, from a shelf, and, putting it into my hands, "There," said she, "are what will inform my beloved Sedmore of all it is necessary he should know, if it is denied me once more to mingle my soul with his, and die in his arms: But should you see him when I am gone, permit me to warn you, solemnly to warn you, that the name of Lord Danbury never, never, pass your lips; the life of the man I love is too dear to my apprehensive soul, to risque it by an unavailing contest with a villain—to embitter his future days by the knowledge of what is now past all redress, and the sad effects of which, vengeance, however just, would, perhaps, only aggravate." I promised observance to her request, and my soul participated

participated in all her sufferings, when the door of the cottage suddenly opened, and we heard the old woman speaking in a dissuasive tone to somebody just without it ; the idea of Lord Danbury forcibly occurred, and I sat pale and trembling.

“ Do not, your Honor ! do not ! you will be her death !” repeated the cottager ; but her intreaties were vain : A tall elegant man, in a naval uniform, rushed in, and clasped my fair companion, fainting, in his arms. — Our benevolent hostess uttered an exclamation of tender concern ; for the amiable manners, and patient affliction of her beautiful guest, had greatly endeared her to her heart. The stranger still continued in silence to fold his loved prize in his arms, while his eyes were mournfully fixed on her altered features, and his lips fondly impressed on her pallid cheek. It was the expected husband ! it was the distracted Sedmore ! And when I saw the big tears of tenderest sensibility roll over his manly face, mine fell into torrents. Never, never,

never, I trust, shall I again witness a similar scene!—"Is she gone?" he cried, raising his eyes from the death-like figure before him to my face—"is she gone for ever?" he added, turning to the sorrowing cottager. "Alack, no, God forbid!" exclaimed the honest creature.—"Madam is often so—like as for dead—but it is only a fit, though, to be sure, it is a terrible bad one; she looks just for all the world like a corpse, but she will come too again, by the blessing of heaven." The old woman begged she might be laid upon the bed, where she soon evinced signs of animation, and was restored to her former weak and languid state. A flood of tears then came to the relief of her oppressed heart. She wept passionately in the bosom of her lover, her friend, her husband, as she emphatically termed him, her only earthly good, and, leaving them together, I withdrew into the other division of the hovel, with its aged and worthy mistress. We had not been there long ere Mr. Sedmore joined us, saying, that his Anna was fallen into a
sweet

sweet slumber, which, he hoped, would prove salutary, after the injuries her mind and frame appeared to have sustained. He then addressed some inquiries, suggested by that anxiety ever attendant on real tenderness, to the cottager, intreating her to inform him, if she could, what had reduced his drooping much-loved Anna to the state in which he found her, or occasioned her being in that part of the world, and an inhabitant of her dwelling. But the cautious woman was guarded against all his appeals to her heart, which, although so powerful as to draw tears from her eyes and mine, was not sufficiently forcible to prevail on her to be unfaithful to her trust, and ignorance was her only plea for security. The Lady came to the door of her hovel, one dark, rainy night, she said, and intreated a little house room: She seemed ill and in trouble, and she gave her the best welcome in her poor power, and there she had remained ever since. It was near three months, she said, and she had nursed and comforted Madam all she could, but

but with little effect ; each day had brought an addition to her illness and her sorrows.

“ But now you are come, Sir,” she added, “ I hope all will be well.”—“ I pray God it may,” said Mr. Sedmore, with energy. — “ Oh ! my love ! my life ! what would I not do, what not encounter to snatch from the devouring grave the dearest, the only solace of my doating soul ! It was hard to be torn from my best comfort, my sole treasure, my tender, faithful Anna, her, in whose indulgent love my errors found forgiveness, and my heart content. To leave her, who had fondly soothed the pangs of my distress, whose cheerful smile, whose soft endearments, so oft chased sorrow from a mind racked by innumerable perplexities, weighed down by many evils, who shared the morsel of my poverty, made me forget my cares, and reconciled me to existence that else were often insupportable. To be forced from this gentle, this kind compassionate being, this most tenderly attached of women,

women, whose every happiness was comprised in my love, and my society, whose eyes ever sparkled with the rapture of her heart at my approach, and who ever flew to meet and welcome me with a countenance irradiated by gladness; to leave such a creature drooping in health and mind, to know that in losing me she lost her only joy, her most valued blessing, and yet to be driven far away with the deep wound of this conviction rankling in my soul, that I left her unbefriended, exposed to variety of censure, and devoid of the means of support. Oh! it was a cruel destiny, and hers, I fear, is marked with its bitterness. I am the involuntary murderer of her, of whose worth and love I have received such uncommon, such unequivocal proofs, and to bless and preserve whom I should, heaven thou canst witness, I should think no sacrifice too great! To the Power, to whom he appealed, Mr. Sedmore seemed to address these words, and was awhile unconscious of any other presence. He continued many minutes in silence,

and apparently absorbed in sad reflections : All was hushed around, not an object stirred to interrupt his mournful reverie, and I had an opportunity of observing his person more critically than I hitherto had done. Mr. Sedmore's figure is such as the most perfect artist might be proud to imitate—tall, and finely proportioned, graceful, elegant, and manly, with a large portion of the lightness and activity of youth, although Mr. Sedmore is past that period, being, as I judge, about six or seven and thirty. His features are regular and expressive—his eyes particularly full of fire, yet tempered by a softness, calculated to steal imperceptibly upon the senses—his countenance remarkably open and interesting—his face altogether even still more striking than critically handsome, and his *tout ensemble*, such as, in my opinion, every beholder of taste and feeling must approve. His understanding is at once strong and brilliant ; he seems well versed in every useful and polite science, and I can discover that he possesses a fund of native wit and vivacity, though,

though, since I have known him, overpowered by heavy affliction.

On our returning to the chamber of Anna, Mr. Sedmore's emotions became too powerful for concealment ; the deep and frequent sigh would not be repressed, and his averted face betrayed the exquisite agony of his heart : I saw the struggle, the inward contest, whenever he contemplated the death-struck features of her he loved, and I mournfully anticipated the blow of dreaded separation that I was convinced was inevitable. Mr Sedmore often looked at me with inquiring eyes, until Anna satisfied the curiosity which it was natural for him to feel, by informing him of all she judged it proper and necessary for him to know concerning me.

On the evening of Mr. Sedmore's arrival, he urged the propriety, nay necessity, of removing his Anna, where she might obtain medical assistance. I agreed with him, but Anna was averse ; the kind cottager, and the

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peaceful

peaceful cottage, were become congenial to her feelings, and she expressed a wish to remain there a few days longer.—“What,” said she, sighing, and looking with streaming eyes on her husband, “Oh! what can bind up the broken heart?” — “Cannot your Henry?” he inquired, with most affecting energy.—“Will you not try to live, to bless him?”—“I would,” she replied, leaning on his bosom, while her fast flowing tears wetted his shirt.—“I fain would live, because I know you wish it, else,” she murmured, in a low and scarce articulate voice, “it were better not. Ah! try to reconcile yourself, dear Henry, we must, must part; and in this calm, this lonely dwelling, this abode of guiltless sympathy, of unassuming piety, of humble worth, I had hoped to breathe my last; the benevolent spirit of its owner hath endeared it to my soul.”—“Oh! talk not so, my adored love!” Mr. Sedmore said, “we must not, shall not part; many, many years of happiness, I trust, await us yet together;” but his looks refused their testimony

mony to the hope he expressed—sad apprehensions evidently tortured his soul — yet again he urged the probable efficacy of medical aid. Anna shook her head; but our united intreaties prevailed—we all removed to lodgings in the neighbouring market town, the cottage was shut up, and Anna's favorite aged friend was still her attendant. I assisted her exertions: I watched the couch of Anna, and much would I have done to prolong the life of her, who preserved my honor, perhaps, my everlasting peace! But heaven denied her to our prayers — she breathed her last in the arms of her loved husband, the force of whose affliction, language would in vain attempt to describe! With him I followed her remains; with her dying breath she commended me to his friendship and care, and our worthy cottager was not forgotten. The first interval of sufficient resignation Mr. Sedmore employed in the perusal of his Anna's papers. There he only learned, that the pecuniary distresses in which his absence had involved her, had

occasioned her accepting the protection of Mrs. Leopald; but her illness and dejection increasing, she had been obliged to quit that Lady, after experiencing some unkindness, which it would only wound his heart were she to repeat, and could not benefit either party; but referred him to Mrs. Leopald, without delay, for some cloaths, many trifles which she highly valued, and several books of his, which she had left in that Lady's possession, and which she had waited for him to claim. A few lines were added, written in the last hours of her life, enforcing her request, that he would guard and befriend me to the utmost of his ability, informing him, that I had unfortunately been a short time under the same protection, and that some disagreeable events, and alarming fears, similar to what she had herself experienced, had, by a strange coincidence of circumstances, occasioned my taking shelter in the same cottage; and, as she doubted not but I had likewise demands on Mrs. Leopald for property left behind, she knew his nature

too

too well to render it essential to intreat, that he would use every exertion in his power to secure me justice. Of that Mr. Sedmore assured me; but I knew there was a fatal sequel to his Anna's tale, of which he was happily ignorant; a sequel, which had cut short the thread of her existence, and would, were he acquainted with it, perhaps, prove equally fatal to his own.

Mr. Sedmore embraced an early day to wait on Mrs. Leopald; but that good Lady had, no doubt, heard the particulars of Anna's fate, and all its attendant circumstances, from the talkative inhabitants of the town; and as these circumstances must, to her guilty soul, wear rather a formidable garb, from the presence of Mr. Sedmore and myself, and the fear of detection and punishment, she had very prudently moved off with all possible speed, and, as her route could not be traced, Mr. Sedmore's claims were useless. Lord Danbury, respecting whom Mr. Sedmore was totally ignorant, and with whose

name or rank the villagers were unacquainted, quitted the cottage previous to Mrs. Leopald, and they could only inform Mr. Sedmore, in reply to his inquiries, that Madam was gone with all her furniture, and his Honor, Madam's relation, went first. But to the merits of this her noble patron, Mr. Sedmore was happily a stranger; and I was, not less from my knowledge of his accomplished art and villainy, and my regard for the peace and safety of Mr. Sedmore, than from my solemn assurance to his Anna, forbidding declaring; and such had been the cautious procedure of his Lordship, and his abandoned partner in iniquity, that they had both left the character of excellence behind them, and the poor of the village followed them with prayers, from their having wisely distributed some inconsiderable trifles among these their humble and unsuspecting neighbours.

Leaving the good old cottager with her reward, which, though much unequal to the feelings of either Mr. Sedmore or myself,

was

was by her deemed abundantly liberal, to enjoy her native hovel and contentment, we hastened to London; and the chaise that conducted us hither, by my request, stopped at the door of Mr. Jefferies, where I bade Mr. Sedmore adieu, as he was going to a distant part of the metropolis; but he promised to see me the following day. My reception in the family of Mr. Jefferies was such as I had little expected, and was ill prepared to encounter. Both that gentleman and his wife seemed to regard me with looks of abhorrence and contempt; the former abruptly observed, with a grin, as soon as I entered, that I had not written to them as I promised; and the latter, colouring with indignation, that I had given them a false direction. To both these charges I pleaded guileless. That I had written to them was a truth, and if I had imposed on them, it was by having been myself imposed on.

“ Ay, ay, you have been imposed on, with a witness, I believe,” cried Mr. Jefferies;

I 5

“ and

“ and so you found my words true, in some sense, I suppose. What, so his Lordship turned you over to the officer that left you at our door, hey, Miss Iphy ?”

“ But people of any spirit do not chuse to be made such Jack upon occasions of,” added his *gentle* minded Lady. I was incapable of making any reply, or of attempting to vindicate my wounded fame and feelings; but, rushing from my gross and barbarous insulters, I called a hackney coach from the street, and, with my baggage, was conveyed to the place where Mr. Sedmore informed me, during our journey, that he purposed to reside while he continued in London. There I most fortunately found him; but his surprise on seeing me was indescribable. I explained every mystery, and, as, in order to impress him with a just and now necessary sense of my perplexities, which alone could justify the step I had taken, I was obliged to mention the injury my reputation appeared likely to sustain from the probable insinuations of

Mr.

Mr. and Mrs. Jefferies, and to describe the events that led to their injurious conduct, and dangerous opinions ; I related each circumstance with regard to myself, wherein Lord Danbury was a party, concealing only the real name of that nobleman, in observance of my solemn promise to Anna, and giving him a fictitious appellation and foreign title, a deceit, which, as its motive is laudable, cannot merit censure, for the least appearance of concealment might create doubts and suspicions in Mr. Sedmore's mind, by no means favorable to his opinion of me, or to his own peace. He felt all the force of my destitute and pitiable situation, and assured me of his faithful and active friendship. A lodging was immediately procured for me in a reputable family, near that in which Mr. Sedmore himself resides, where I have now been some days, under the character of his sister, an innocent imposition which he has prevailed on me to adopt, from the more weighty consideration of avoiding censure, otherwise inevitable ; for vulgar minds, he

assures me, and from what I have hitherto observed, I am inclined to think the assertion just, are naturally prone to unite suspicions particularly painful to delicate and susceptible spirits, to their knowledge of every attachment between the sexes, however pure, virtuous and disinterested, it may be in fact.

The society of Mr. Sedmore is now my only consolation and support. Real unostentatious goodness of heart is his. He professes little, but his looks and manners are the eloquent betrayers of his feelings. He is generous, ardent, compassionate, sympathizing, and full of unobtrusive sterling merit. My soul owns him for a friend worth cherishing: He acts the part of a brother, consoles, advises, and supports my fainting spirits; and when I weep the loss of the dear, the sacred mementos of my mother, that valued miniature, supposed to be the resemblance of my father; these inestimable relics, more, far more to me than any other pecuniary consideration, the amiable Sedmore bids

bids me hope every thing from time, and the blest consciousness of my own integrity, assured, that heaven never deserts the virtuous. Alas ! but it sometimes permits them to fall, my Isabella, to fall into the depths of guilt ! (if where the will is not culpable can be deemed guilt) from the purest intentions of innocence ; for was not such the fate of Anna ? And her soul, I know, was virtuous, pure in thought as the morning sons of bliss ; her faithful heart abhorred pollution, and yet she was permitted to become a prey to the determined and un pitying villainy of the basest of the human-race. I oft shudder at this penetrating reflection, as Sedmore strives to comfort me under the embarrassments of my present situation : That the innocent heart should be exposed, and left, unguarded, to the mercy of the wicked, is a mysterious lot, and not less apparently severe than wonderful ! But we are blind creatures, incapable of discerning the good that oft results from temporary evil. I recollect the story of the traveller and angel, and, impressed with the utility

utility and excellence of its moral, am convinced it is hardly possible for poor mortality to judge aright. Mercy took away the golden cup of the liberal, and snatched the darling child from the fond parent; so Mercy, doubtless, for some wise end, first suffered the lovely Anna to fall a prey to the most detestable machinations, the most abominable cruelty and falsehood, and finally separated her, during this state of existence, from her adoring Sedmore! May not the same good Providence likewise, to work some future favourable event for your Iphigenia, have allowed the accumulation of her present distresses, if only to fortify my soul in the school of affliction, the designation may be merciful, and the result happy. It is by this, and similar considerations, that I endeavour to reconcile my mind to every vicissitude, and resign myself to the painful necessity of being compelled to take refuge among strangers, where the few guineas in my pocket can but, for a short time, procure me the means of sustaining nature; and
whither

whither I am then to direct my steps, is an inquiry that often obtrudes itself upon my mind, but under the most afflictive dispensation that can overwhelm me, while I possess life and sense, the assurance of your undiminished friendship will be my best support. I have not yet been enabled to obtain any recent intelligence respecting what is one of the great sources of anxiety and importance to me, the health, welfare, and happiness of the dear and excellent possessors of Arran-Vale. Ah! how long is it since my pen has traced the name of Ethbert! How much longer since I beheld and conversed with him! How probable that we may never meet more! Adieu! the pen drops from my hand.

IPHIGENIA.

LETTER XV.

I CONTINUE to write, my dear Isabella, although hopeless of receiving your answers for many months to come. In conversing thus with you, my heart, under its most heavy oppressions, finds a relief; it banishes many an anxious and obtruding thought, and carries back my ideas to scenes of past felicity: Again, I sometimes fancy myself with you and your cousin, seated amid the enchanting haunts, and wandering through the delightful woods of Arran-Vale, each endearing circumstance recurs forcibly to my mind; but soon the pleasing illusion vanishes, reality obscures the charming retrospect, and sadness fills my soul. Am I never to enjoy those highly valued blessings more? Am I never again to embrace you,
my

my gentle, my generous friend ? The thought is hardly to be endured ! I will dismiss the painful subject, and resume that of my new and present protector, the worthy Sedmore. His character is of that sort that improves upon acquaintance, and each added hour evinces in him some new and amiable trait : We pass a portion of every day together. No wonder he was so dear to Anna, so calculated to charm in the calm hours of social intercourse, of friendly confidence ; what must he be in the softer ones of love ? — While I listen to his pleasing converse, I, involuntarily, draw comparisons between him and Ethbert ; but I can hardly decide, which, divested of all partiality, is the more estimable and engaging. Sedmore possesses as much winning softness, and gentleness of manners, with, as may well be imagined, when the extreme youth and inexperience of your cousin is remembered, more stability and strength of mind, and uniformity of character : His sentiments are better weighed and fixed : His sense, excelled, I believe, by few,

few, is highly improved by his knowledge of the world : His observations on men and manners are just, striking, and display at once the goodness and elevation of his mind : The same noble and liberal opinions distinguish him : Talents as splendid by nature, and enriched by a longer and intimate acquaintance with mankind : Generous to excess, like Ethbert, but with more discrimination. Sedmore is six and thirty, Ethbert but twenty-two : When the same years and experience have passed over him, will he be less respectable ? At present he is equally amiable. Ah ! what on earth can be more so ! To him is given the same power to touch and command the soul, to render himself beloved, with the same purity, the same constancy, as Sedmore was by his hard-fated Anna. Their persons are both by nature fine, but the difference of age make these distinctions : The lighter graces of early life adorn that of Ethbert, while the manly elegance, and untaught ease, finished manners, and native vivacity of Sedmore, are not less

less conspicuous. Ethbert's visage glows with the vivid bloom of youth and health; the blue veins mantle around his clear brown forehead; his full lips emulate the deepest carnation; his dark auburn hair is uninjured by the hand of sorrow, or the severity of climes or seasons, and the lustre of his dark hazle eyes are untarnished, while the countenance of Sedmore is often marked with the lines of thought and suffering; more fair than Ethbert, by nature his cheeks are embrowned in the service of his country, and under less happy skies; his fine light brown hair is here and there changed by the heat to which, in the important discharge of duty, it has been exposed; and his blue eyes, though sometimes obscured by the afflictions of his heart, and the perverseness of fortune, generally possess still more spirit and penetration than that for which those of Ethbert are remarkable: Their expression I never yet saw equalled, no, not by Ethbert's, favorable as I am, doubtless, inclined to be to the

the graces of his form, no less than to the virtues of his mind.

Friendship and gratitude, alone, attach me to Sedmore, while a far different sentiment is added to actuate my soul towards your cousin ; a sentiment I cannot define—a sort of sacred impulse—a divine principle, which it is impossible to withstand—an impulse at once pure, dispassionate, yet tender—to be for ever near him, and share the blessings of his society with you, forms my highest, my utmost wish, would constitute to me the most perfect bliss I can imagine : Can there be a happiness on earth beyond it ? I have tasted that happiness ; but, ah ! I must taste it no more ; it is lost—fled—torn from us ; he esteemed—valued—loved me ! Would the last had been spared ; it has proved hitherto a fatal drop in our cup of life ; it has embittered our peace ; my felicity was complete without it, and his is, I fear, its martyr. Ah ! why is this tumultuous passion, love, suffered to make such dreadful inroads

on domestic tranquillity? Such wretched havoc in the most worthy hearts? How does it still torture that of the excellent Sedmore? His recent woes, his irreparable loss, lies heavy on his mind; yet is he strictly observant of all the exalted duties of humanity, and even its most trivial attentions are not neglected. Since I have known him, the justice of an observation I have somewhere heard, often strikes me with peculiar force, that the misfortunes of the virtuous are a public good; and that adversity, so far from enervating or vitiating their minds, is a source of excellent and useful actions, which forms their highest pleasure. Such are, I am assured, the pleasures that Sedmore most delights in: The moral virtues are his own; they are rooted in his heart. Indulgent, even to the depravity of his fellow mortals; he would rather reform than punish; and, in his present adverse state, although scarcely, I fear, possessing the means of proper support, his charitable hand will not be withheld. In these assertions I am warranted by
ample

ample proofs of his compassionate and noble temper.

Not many days ago, an elderly woman, meanly dressed, knocked at the door of the house where I lodge, and inquired if there was not a tall, handsome gentleman, an officer, lived there; but the servant, to whom she applied, repulsed her with brutality, and telling her they had not any such inhabitant, rudely shut the door in her face. I regarded her with much attention from the window of my apartment; though marked by poverty in the extreme, yet she looked superior to the common class of mendicants: She was nicely clean and neat, and there was that in her whole appearance which denoted her having seen better days. My heart was interested in her favor: The inquiry she had made presented with it the image of Sedmore to my thoughts. I wished to question her, but was fearful; my situation required the strictest caution. The people of the house might draw unfavorable conclusions, if I
interrogated

interrogated the woman, only because she inquired for an officer. My curiosity was great—my apprehensions many. Should it be Sedmore, thought I; should he, which heaven forbid, but should he be a bad man, may it not be a blessing now to know it, to be enabled, thus timely, to be upon a stricter guard? Lord Danbury too appeared amiable. I will speak to this woman. She was still lingering about the door, and looking up, wishfully, at the different windows. — Tears stood in her eyes. I threw up the sash of the parlour I lodge in, that she might judge from my appearance that I was an inhabitant of the house, and, perhaps, thereby be induced to address me, if I gave her an opportunity, and, slipping on my bonnet and cloak, I issued forth into the street. The woman regarded me attentively as I opened and shut the door, and, as I wished, followed me. She traced my footsteps, in silence, till I turned the corner of the street, when coming into one less frequented, she said, approaching nearer, with a look, tone, and air of
most

most impressive humility—"Young Lady, you seem as if you would pardon me, as if you could feel for the unfortunate, and pity the poor; as if, too, you would not disdain to satisfy the anxious wishes of a grateful heart; a heart, desirous to gladden that of a worthy benefactor—to see him once more—to thank—to bless him, who, under Providence, has restored me all—more—more—than I can say—to pour before him the tears of joy—of gratitude—of transport—a wife, a mother's tears—which now flow only from thankfulness." She could not restrain her emotions, nor, for the moment proceed. — Her language, her voice, and manner, affected me inexpressibly; and I could only say, "What can I do to serve and oblige you?"—The poor woman's eyes testified an acknowledgement far superior to any that mere words alone can convey, and, clasping my hand, respectfully, "You look like an angel," said she, "and you seem to possess an angel's goodness; perhaps the gentleman is your brother; for a gentleman he is, and

good and lovely as you are. He has saved my whole family, Madam, snatched my dear husband from death, my children from perishing, visited my husband in prison, relieved him thence, supplied all our wants, has been a ministering angel to me and my family; but would never let us know who he is, or where he lives: He paid fifteen pounds for my husband's liberty; he had been in confinement a dreadful long time, and was on the brink of the grave, and we were almost starving. I have one daughter grown up, and five little ones, the eldest of the five only nine years old; and what with attending my poor husband, and the care of the children, and working with our needle, and taking in washing, or any thing we could get beside, my dear Sally and I, God knows, had enough to do, and all to little purpose; my husband often wanted the necessary comforts his sad state required, and my pretty innocents cried for bread. My dutiful, but in that respect mistaken Sally, was on the point of sacrificing her own peace to her

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parents

parents wants. A nobleman offered great things ; but her honor was the cruel price ! But that I never knew a word about till the danger was past, and God sent the gentleman I want to find out. He has been almost our daily visitor ever since ; but now I am afraid something has happened to him, for he has not been near us these six days, and the last time he was there he dropped a torn piece of a letter, by which it appears that he borrowed thirty pounds the day before he paid my husband's debt ; and I doubt not but it was chiefly for that purpose, which adds tenfold to his goodness and our obligation. The letter likewise shews, that he is under many difficulties ; pity such a soul should know distress.

But, Madam, what I now wish is, to inform him, that our worst troubles are now, I trust, intirely at an end, and to beg to pay him back his money without offence ; for an old aunt of mine in the country, that would never assist us in her life-time, is now
dead,

dead, and has left me near eight hundred pounds in cash, with a house and furniture, stock in trade, and shop, in a good business, by which she has got all her money, and which will, by the blessing of heaven enable us to enjoy happiness again, and our days in peace, and bring up our children with credit. The news came but this morning, and the first thing we thought of, after our first surprise and joy, was our dear benefactor ; and one of the children saying yesterday they saw him come out of the house, where you live, I suppose, Madam, and heard him say to a Lady he would come back and dine, we concluded it was his home, especially as he always went that way from us, and, actuated by that belief, I called to inquire ; but was very roughly answered, and my heart was deeply wounded by it ; but, ah ! the garb of poverty generally creates suspicion, and invites insult from the base and hard-hearted.”—“Great God !” I could not but exclaim ; “but this officer, was he in mourning ?”—“He was, Madam, I forgot that ;

but he was.”—“ Then you do know him ?” said the interesting inquirer, with eager emotion.—“ I do, I cried,” clasping my hands in a transport of joy.—“ Tell me where you live ; your gratitude is praise-worthy ; it will not go unrewarded : I will see you to-morrow ; you shall again see and make happy your benefactor ; he justly merits your encomiums.”—“ Heaven blefs you both,” she said, and, giving me her address, we parted, and I hurried home with a full heart.

Sedmore had called during my absence, and left word he would be with me to tea. I waited his arrival with impatience. I received him with a tremulous satisfaction I could not conceal.

“ Miss Monterville !” said he, as soon as we were seated, “ my sweet sister ! my very much esteemed friend, and gentle counsellor ! has any thing alarmed you ? You seem in emotion ; yet you look not ill, unhappy, nor displeased.”

But

" But I am the latter, though," said I, whatever I may look. I am angry because you deceive, or at least doubt me. You call me friend, yet refuse me your confidence, and counsellor, while you scorn to apply for my advice."

" And you look serious too, little reprover," said he, smiling; " Come, tell me my crime, and fix the punishment."

" Pray take care you are not dodged here by women again," I said, gravely, " to the great endangerment of my fair fame, the loss of my good opinion, not to mention the train of evils that may ensue to my gentle brother."

He started. " Dodged by women!" he exclaimed, " What mean you? Sure none has been so base, so daringly audacious, as to say, or ——."

K 3

" Yes,

“ Yes, but there has,” I interrupted ;
“ indeed, there has, and I have seen, and
spoke to the very person.”

“ What person ?” he hastily demanded.

“ Nay, be not so impetuous,” I replied ;
“ but, to satisfy you, I am well informed.
Ah ! well may you blush ; but here,” unclasp-
ing my pocket-book, “ here is the convicting
proof.” He almost snatched it from me ;
his colour changed, and the fire of his ex-
pressive eyes were fixed on the insensible
carpet.—“ Well may you look guilty,” I
resumed : “ Indeed, my good reserved bro-
ther, you are fairly detected ;” but, feeling
for his delicate and extreme embarrassment,
I rang for tea, and the entrance of the ser-
vant afforded him relief, and gave him leisure
to collect himself.

“ And how ?” said Sedmore, holding up
the woman’s address, which I had marked
on

on a card with my pencil, "how is it possible you could obtain this?"—After observing his various feelings a short time, I unravelled the mystery, and informed him of what I have already related. Surprise was quickly succeeded by pleasure the most lively. He rejoiced at the happy change of fortune in the distressed, but worthy family, whose welfare was really dear to his heart. He related the manner in which they had become known to him, and the motives that had interested him so warmly in their cause. The next morning we paid them a visit; but I must defer the discussion of these subjects to another day, as they will, with some others, form no inconsiderable addition to the present enormity of my packet, which I always keep in a state ready to dispatch at the shortest warning, by the first conveyance to your part of the world.

IPHIGENIA.

K 4

LETTER

LETTER XVI.

IT was on returning from visiting me one evening, a few days after our arrival from the country, that Sedmore beheld a very lovely young woman apparently in deep distress. She passed him, endeavouring to conceal her tears and sighs from the eye of observation; but, ever interested by the traits of modest sorrow, and, in some degree, attracted by the youth and beauty of the girl, he followed her through several streets. Her anguish seemed to increase with every step she took, till at length, believing herself unobserved, she wrung her hands, and, looking up to heaven, "It must be so," she said; "Great God! forgive me; but my father, or myself, must fall: And can I see him perish? Oh! never; ought I, when any ways enabled

enabled to prevent it? Canst thou require it, Eternal Power! Support, guide, defend me!" She turned round the corner into a square: She trembled, and seemed sinking into the earth; but, supporting herself a moment against the iron railing before a gentleman's house, she wept most bitterly, and besought Providence to preserve, to spare both and her father: "But can I now recede?" she exclaimed; "a few minutes may decide my fate, my ruin!" She sunk down upon the step of the door, and, leaning her head upon her hand, continued to weep.

"Young woman," said Sedmore. She started, sprang upon her feet, and would have escaped from him, but he gently detained her. — "Perhaps, said he, "your prayers are heard; I will, if possible, preserve both you and your father. Fear not to confide in me: You shall find me, though not a powerful, a very sincere, and very disinterested friend." — She looked at him, trembling, and doubtingly. Sedmore soothed,

K 5

intreated,

intreated, encouraged.—“Haste, then, Sir, angel, or whatever you are—oh! haste, and let us quit this place, for yonder he comes—there! there! but he does not see me yet; age has dimmed his sight; hide me, Sir, beside you, and let us fly.” Sedmore looked where her eyes directed, and beheld an elderly and very respectable looking gentleman, who ought to have been superior to the baseness of making a prey of the unfortunate, and taking a cruel advantage of an amiable but mistaken creature. They turned short out of the square, and the, no doubt, ardently expecting lover, was left to cool himself, and ruminate upon his inhuman and shameless conduct, and the disappointment of his barbarous hopes.

Thus, almost miraculously preserved, with a heart beating with grateful joy, Sally Lifford became more reassured, and traced the sad causes of that resolution so near proving fatal to their source. An ample settlement was to have been the price of her apostacy from
from

from that virtue, which her soul revered. In vain had her own distresses, and those of her family, pleaded with her determined seducer; his heart was callous to the touch of sympathetic woe, and he with-held assistance, but on condition of the required sacrifice, although what would amply have relieved their every want, would not have been missed amidst his abundance, and would have been a bright jewel in the immortal crown of a just man.

Sedmore listened to Sally Lifford's artless narrative: He admired the feelings of the girl, and pitied the sorrows of her parents: He did more, he relieved them, and the manner of his bestowing that relief, together with the addition it brought to his own heavy difficulties, added a thousand fold to its worth, and its recollection will, assuredly, to himself, smooth the pillow of pain, age, or sickness, and prove a cordial blessing through every vicissitude. Diffusive charity, in all its nameless branches, is a source of never-ending good; and its happy fruits will make the

heaven of those that practise it like Sedmore, free from every taint of ostentation, commence, even in this life.

What an affecting scene were we presented with at Mr. Lifford's ! The grateful family thronged around their benefactor, whose sanguine flush and embarrassed manner spoke that innate modesty, that humble sense, ever attendant on real merit, which never satisfied with itself, avoids all parade, and as assiduously shuns observation, as ostentation courts it, who, if its hand is casually directed to any laudable action, is most susceptible of the reward, which public notice, and clamorous applause, affords; nor knows the bliss of any more exalted gratification, such as Sedmore must, undoubtedly, experience, in the secret whispers of an approving God ! who has expressed his gracious favor in a particular manner toward those who administer to the hungry, the naked, and the prisoner ; and to the merciful will (he has declared) shew singular mercy.

Sedmore

Sedmore congratulated Mr. and Mrs. Lifford on their good fortune ; and the deserving pair replied, that, under Providence, it was from him that blessing received its value : “ For, but for you,” added the latter, “ where would my husband, nay, where would any of us have been, ere its arrival ? above all, what would have become of our dear Sally ?”—The sweet girl entered just as her parent mentioned her. She has a very fine person, is about a year younger than myself, and I could not help thinking her too handsome, as well as too sensible and too refined, for the inhabitant of such a dwelling ; she would grace the noblest.

We stayed a considerable time. I conversed with the parents and Sally, with whom I am peculiarly pleased, and played with the younger ones, who are remarkable fine children. We promised to repeat the visit soon ; but still Sedmore declined giving his name. The good and grateful people appeared mortified, and as soon as we had left them, I expressed

expressed my surprise at his reserve.—“I have many and powerful reasons,” he said ; “ they know my family, and the assistance I gave them, though extremely trifling, and in itself immaterial, might, under my present circumstances, if rumoured among my friends, brand me deeper with the stigma of imprudence ; therefore I wish to avoid being fully known to them, as it would be next to impossible to suppress the effusions of such grateful natures ; nor is this the only cause of my reserve : My lamented love, my Anna, was their relation, and on that account, knowing as they do from the letter I drop’d, (which, from the superscription being torn off, you find was far from satisfactory) that my affairs are in an uneasy posture, they would, I doubt not, be distressing me by offers of pecuniary service, which I could not, with honor, or consistent with my sentiments and feelings, accept, and which it would wound their generous hearts for me to refuse.”

I could

I could not but acknowledge there was some propriety in these reasons : " It is therefore necessary that I conceal myself from them at present," added Sedmore : " They are, thank God, happy, beyond what I could have hoped. My plan was to have applied to a nobleman, to whom I am well known, and who has much in his power, to procure the old man some little place under government, such as the Post-office, or any situation for which his age and abilities qualify him ; but he will now be better off, I trust, and end his days with ease and tranquillity in the bosom of his family, who will be decently provided for, and are doubly endeared to his soul, for the affliction they have shared with each other. They will soon necessarily remove from London, and our acquaintance must then cease, until fortune beholds me with a more propitious eye. I cannot make them more happy, nor will I in any sense make them less so ; the return of the inconsiderable sum I advanced to them I shall not object to : The pressure of unpaid obligation

lies

lies heavily upon the feeling mind. I would not inflict so intolerable a burden; they will find a laudable pride in the reimbursement, which would be ill gratified by the retention of the paltry sum. I can imagine exactly how I should feel in their situation, and act accordingly. We can call on them often while they continue in town, and, if ever fate deigns again to smile on me, I shall remember their worth with pride and pleasure.— They have had a long series of misfortunes, and are, as I have often heard Anna describe them, just, well-meaning, amiable, people, and as such I shall long retain them in my memory and regard.”

I made no reply: I was incapable of making any. Sedmore's many virtues, and endowments, passed in succession through my mind. Most amiable man! thought I, as I leaned on his arm, and contemplated his elegant profile. Pity so few are like thee; pity *thou* shouldst ever taste of sadness, who art so ready to chase it from the hearts of others.

others. We were both silent and thoughtful for some minutes, when Sedmore said, "I have likewise another reason for concealment from the Lifford's; it would infallibly discover our consanguinity to be what it is, only of adoption: Would to heaven it were otherwise! that I had, indeed, a brother's tender claim to love and for ever protect you; but is not that of friendship nearly as potent?"

"Altogether in my opinion," I replied. "Believe me, I feel it so," said the worthy Sedmore, "and I will strive to deserve the distinction of your esteem; your trust, assure yourself, I never will, in any sense, abuse either."—"You cannot," said I; "no, indeed, I cannot."—"Your heart would not give you leave," I added. He smiled:—"And therefore it is," he resumed:—"I am careful to guard you against the breath of censure, the least shadow of doubt, of injurious suspicion. I know not how it is; but you are dear to my soul, excepting two,
never

never was woman dearer." I trembled ; he saw my confusion—my fear ; indeed, I was afraid ; it seemed like a prelude to what would have effectually destroyed all that sweet enchanting ease and confidence we had hitherto experienced.

" I know your apprehensions," said Sedmore, half smiling, but banish them. I think you an amiable creature ; but I am not, nor shall ever be, your lover : With regard to me, that passion lies buried in the grave of my Anna ; it can neither delight nor torture me more. I tenderly esteem, and highly value you : I wish to protect, to serve, to cherish you, with all the purity of fraternal attachment ; but never entertained a wish or thought offensive to the sanctity of a brother's love. Let no false idea, then, banish the delightful freedom of sincere esteem and mutual confidence, which, I hope, at present subsists between us, and of which, in the first moment that I prove myself unworthy, behold me no more. Such a
friendship

friendship as is proper to be supported between the sexes, is of a most delicate nature; where the heart is not right, some unguarded moment will assuredly betray it, and any lapse on the part of our sex ought, on no consideration, to be overlooked, or pardoned by yours. The least failure in propriety in such a case, admits not of palliation; like infidelity in wedlock, it shews a disaffection of heart, that no argument whatever can do away. The man that truly loves, where he has pledged his sacred faith at the altar, will find no felicity so true, so perfect, as in the dear society of the wedded object; self-love, the love of happiness, of which we are all, according to our different ideas of it, in pursuit, will defend him from breaking the solemn bond witnessed by heaven. Virtuous love, in either sex, prevents one vagrant wish, one wandering thought; its nature may be termed holy; it draws its source, its pure and sanctified essence, from the fountain-head of all perfection; it knows no base sinister views, but seeks unerringly, the good
of

of its object ; while insipidity and vice roam ever in a fruitless search of that felicity they never can taste, and find the height of all their bliss delusion. But pardon me, Iphigenia, I digress too far. My proper subject was more immediately relative to ourselves ; let me then caution you never to forgive the man, who, professing only friendship, dares, either by look, by word, or gesture, to trespass against the sober rules of that serene passion. Mark him for a traitor, a plotting, deep deceiver, and ever after carefully avoid him : Such characters are the most dangerous. I have studied human nature, and know more than I could wish of its dark side, and I shall rejoice if you profit by my experience. Our sex give us more extensive opportunities of knowing the world in every point of view than yours ; but it is not always that any of us draw just and useful conclusions, or, having done so, that we make a judicious advantage of them."

We

We now reached the door of my residence; Sedmore had the knocker in his hand, and a mendicant was applying for charity to a well-dressed man that was passing by. Sedmore started, and changed colour, exclaiming, "It is the villain!" The passenger raised his eyes, fearfully, and would have fled; but Sedmore, panting with rage, seized him by the collar, saying, "Ungrateful, base, and wicked wretch! would not a given life restrain thy guilty hand?"

"Ah! Sir," cried the man, "Spare me once more; what can my ruin now avail? well I know and feel your goodness." Sedmore rapped at the door, and bid him follow me, while himself took care he should not escape.—"The fellow dropped on his knees the moment he entered the room, implored mercy, and professed penitence.

"Thy life is again in my power," said Sedmore, "and should I bestow it again, thy next attempt will be my life. Oh! base
must

must be thy nature. But why do I parly with thee? My watch was traced—to thy confusion know it—thy person will be sworn to.” The fellow hung his head: “But my Lady’s picture, Sir, what became of that? The rest were of no comparative value in my estimation.” A gleam of hope crossed the features of the culprit.

“I knew it, Sir, I knew it, he cried, and relying on your goodness will confess. It was fear of want made me do as I did, in robbing your Honor.”

“Want!—liar as thou art—why want, while enabled to earn the bread of honest labor?”

“Because I thought, to be sure, I should lose my character.”

“A base and false suggestion,” said Sedmore. “Did I not go so far as even to vindicate

vindicate your cause from that consideration, although well convinced of your guilt? Grant your character had suffered, could you exist no where but among the circle where your crime was known? You were qualified for a useful servant in any part of the civilized world; but wretches like you are seldom at a loss for some plea to justify their offences: However, I stand not here to reason or argue with you—proceed.”

“ The jewels, Sir (God and you forgive me!) I sold them in different countries.”

“ And enriched yourself with the spoils.”

“ All but the picture, Sir.”

“ And that you feared might lead to detection.”

“ No, Sir, I had another reason; I kept it merely because I knew how you valued it; and,

and, Sir, I was determined to restore it the first opportunity."

"But could find none within the lapse of four years!" said Sedmore, looking indignantly at the villain:—"Slave, thou art corrupt, indeed; thy soul is defiled by falsehood: No wonder thou shouldst utter it; but where now is the picture?"

"Sir, I was obliged to part with it since I came to England."

"Rascal!" exclaimed Sedmore, "then you are deriding me! but I deserve it: I thought you said you had it. The duty I owe society requires thy forfeit life; nor will I withhold it."

"Oh! Sir, one moment's pity and patience," cried the man: "I never sold the picture, but necessity obliged me to pawn it."

"And may it be redeemed?"

"Yes,

"Yes, Sir, and I will shew you where it is immediately."

"Do so," said Sedmore, putting on his hat; but will you venture yourself with him?" I inquired.

"Oh! I have no fears for myself; but it is proper we have a coach, as this man is yet my prisoner; and, with your leave," addressing me, "I will order one to be called."

He did so, and much against my wishes and persuasion, stepped fearlessly into it, with the perfidious robber.

In about an hour they returned. Sedmore held the valued portrait in his hand. This second purchase had cost him a considerable sum; I fear, nearly exhausted the contents of his purse. It is the miniature of a Lady, very young, and singularly beautiful, unless greatly flattered by the painter; it is set in gold, and surrounded by brilliants, and there

is a turn of feature, and expression of sweetness, blended with spirit and sense, in the countenance, that strikes me as greatly resembling some face I have seen, but where I cannot recollect. My curiosity was excited by Sedmore's having called it the picture of his Lady, as I had never heard him mention any wife but Anna, whose face, though fine, was far inferior in beauty to that here portrayed, and I rejoiced when the man was permitted to retire.

“ You have my leave to go,” said Sedmore ; “ Your life is spared ; receive the mercy as from heaven, by whom I am enabled to bestow it : There look up with gratitude, and may it produce a change on your principles and manners, which will inevitably render you happier, in proportion as you are more deserving ; for rectitude of heart and conduct ensure felicity, which no temporal advantage can command without it. The practice of the moral duties is but another name for wisdom. Villainy is ever lured in
its

its own snares, and in the end the victim of its duplicity. It is my wish not only to preserve your life, but render it of utility; instead of a depredator on society, to see you a valuable member of it. You have already had abundant proof of the fallacy of vice; its false glare, and fatal acquirements you find, soon vanish, and its wretched prey becomes a disgrace to human nature, and a burden to himself, keen remorse gnaws on his heart, and shame embitters his days; and what gains can compensate for such inflictions? There are situations in which your bold and active spirit might be properly and laudably exercised. You are well adapted for the sea, and once were fond of it; if still so, I can and will promote your interest."

"I wish to go abroad, Sir," said the man, with eager quickness.

"Then call on me to-morrow," added Sedmore, giving his address—"I will then speak farther to you; study to deserve it,

and you shall find me your warm and steady friend, forgetful of the past." The man bowed low, and retired. His eye was rivetted on me while he listened to the benevolent admonition of the truly exalted Sedmore. Guilty suffusions crossed his cheek; may they prove harbingers of future penitence.

Again the lovely portrait claimed my attention. Sedmore again gazed fondly on it, and a tear, of which he seemed unconscious, trembled in his eye.—“ Dear memento of early faith and affection !” he cried, “ sacred art thou to my soul. This, Iphigenia,” holding it toward me, “ is the resemblance of one who was once an angel on earth, and is, surely, now a brighter one in glory. Her fate was mysterious; alas! I know not how sad! Her recollection will ever rend my heart; therefore I have long, but vainly, laboured to forget; for many years I have ceased to indulge in the mention of her name, the renumeration of her thousand graces! Oh! she was fair, pure, and fascinating, as the
the

the daughters of Paradise ! Look there ! But what painting can do justice to such a creature ! Mortality was never more exquisitely perfect, and when I lost her, I lost the charm of my existence. She, Iphigenia, was the only woman, except her you knew, that ever touched my heart. I have loved twice, and with equal truth and fervor. This seraph was my first, my very early attachment, the wife of my youth. We grew up from infancy together. We had but one soul. She was an orphan, bred on the charity of my parents. Her origin was never known. Her father was an English gentleman, who was robbed and murdered near my family's estate in Ireland. The villains were sharing the spoils, and quarrelling about the disposal of the child, who was not three years old, when the approach of a numerous company disturbed them, and they made off with their booty, leaving the little innocent to its fate. Among the party that broke in upon them was my father. The infant's beauty and tears touched his soul. Her artless grief

was irresistible. — “ Papa was asleep,” she said, “ and would not look at Jessy.”

“ I will be thy papa, my pretty one,” said my father, springing from his horse, and taking her in his arms. The robbers had secured all the baggage; the chaise was a hired one, and from those it was procured it could only be learned, that the gentleman was English, and seemed in sorrow. The child could only tell that her name was Jessy, and her mamma was gone to live with God Almighty. Inquiries were dispatched to England, and every research made to discover to whom the little stranger belonged, but all without success. I was too young to remember these transactions, being but one year older than Jessy; but the story was impressed indelibly upon the minds of every inhabitant of my father’s house. My parents adopted her for their child, and treated her as such, until our attachment became observable; then it was we first tasted real sadness. Being a younger son, I
was

was designed for a mercantile life, and was destined to be sent to Holland for improvement; but to remove me from the dear object of my soul, was the principal view in this plan. Jessy had previously experienced some unkindness; this I could not bear; it planted a dagger in my peace — should I leave her to reproach—to coldness—to despair, perhaps! I knew her love, and the extreme sensibility of her nature: I saw her health and spirits declining; the hour of separation approached; we were unequal to it. On the night preceding the morning appointed for my departure, I persuaded the dear maid to elope with me: The man who just now left us was then my servant; he was in the secret, and therefore have I ever since regarded him. Instead of Holland, I hastened to Scotland, and the lovely Jessy was confirmed my own by the endearing name of wife. Our marriage increased our love. Can we be too nearly and indissolubly united to those we prefer above all others? What madness and folly has there ever ap-

peared to me in complaining of the chains of wedlock ! Ah ! what a bliss to be bound in soft captivity with those we adore ! This nominal bondage is, in fact, the most delightful freedom, the enchanting liberty, the inestimable privilege of glorying in the purest of passions, of tasting, without remorse or fear, the highest of human felicities !—of calling the being we select from woman-kind, our own !—of living in the delightful and mutual interchanges of fond and faithful attachment !—unstung by the bitter sense of transgressing against the commands of the Most High, and the laws of our country !—to taste of happiness without offending virtue—to be at once blest and honorable—and not turn with the feelings of a destroyer from the creature we profess to love ; but in whose once innocent bosom the pangs of sin conceal themselves, the effects of seduction has fixed secret and unconquerable woe ! Poor are the joys that such triumphs can afford ! I have always wondered to see men, of characters otherwise unexceptionable, pursue

sue them with such avidity ! Shame, misery, and sharp contrition, must eventually be the result to themselves. Trust me, dear Iphigenia, those who truly love have not the wish to betray. The honor and happiness of the object is the first and uniform ambition of their hearts ; to degrade, and place on a level with the lowest, they are incapable. Pray heaven these maxims may enable you to make a choice worthy of you. Never listen a second time to any man who offends your sensibility once ; but let me not stray too wide from my narrative. My union with Jessy made me an exile from my family. My father renounced me, and I have never been admitted to his presence ; nor has he, in the least degree, relaxed his severity since. A young nobleman of my own country, with whom I had contracted an intimacy at school, happening to be in London, whither I hastened with my fair prize, immediately after our marriage, he introduced me to many of his friends : I was advised to enter

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into

into the Navy ; it accorded with my wishes, and I soon obtained a commission.

The frigate I was appointed to serve on board, was ordered on a foreign station ; to part with my loved wife was what I most dreaded ; it was insupportable, and by the kind assistance of my noble friends, it was determined that she should follow in a merchant's ship. Our parting was therefore softened by the delightful hope of soon meeting again. I felt it easier than I at first had feared ; but, under every favorable circumstance, the separation was painful. I summoned my utmost fortitude to support and console my adored love, and embarked with a tender but resigned sadness. That separation was our last. The vessel fixed on to convey my dearest treasure to my arms, was wrecked ! all on board lost, and with it my every hope of happiness perished ! The jewels, of which that villain robbed me, were Jessy's : They were found sewed in different parts of her dead father's dress, which the murderers

murderers, in their haste and confusion, were prevented searching. Round his neck was a black ribbon tied, to which it was imagined there had been a picture, or something valuable suspended ; but whatever it was, it had not escaped the inhuman depredators ; but seemed to have been torn forcibly off.

The jewels, my Jeffy's sole inheritance, she delivered me the day we parted, declaring they would be safest under my care, retaining a ring, with an emerald encircled by diamonds of the first water, which, as from its size it certainly had belonged to a Lady, from a pleasing idea that it had been her mother's, she frequently wore on her finger.

The man, who was just now here, witnessed my poignant sorrow. I had procured him the station of captain's steward, and he was my chief comforter. My extreme youth, being then not eighteen, and strong attachment, made all who knew me conclude, that I could never conquer the effects of this

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great

great loss; but humanity can sustain a vast deal. I returned to England; but my old valet and confidant, the steward, chose to remain behind. I experienced many vicissitudes, rose to a command during the fatal contest with America, was taken prisoner several times, and in France again met with the attendant on my early fortunes. He entered again into my service, and I believed him most faithfully attached and devoted to me. During the war, I was generally successful, and amassed considerable sums; but I know not how—they never continued long with me; early disappointment, I fear, gave me a turn for dissipation, which I never conquered till my heart received a second impression: Honorable love is the best preservative against libertinism. I bore a part in the glorious victory of the immortal Rodney! I saw, with triumph, the conquering British flag wave over our enemies! I returned to England with a competency, and hoped to pass my days in ease and pleasure; but ease and pleasure was not my destination.

My

My purse was at the command of those who called me friend; but I have too often experienced the fallaciousness of their friendships. Worldly wisdom I would not allow a place among the virtues, and was totally devoid of it, an error which has led to many evils. Impoverished by prodigality, and branded with singular imprudence, my best friends withdrew themselves; they declared me proof against admonition, and left me to profit by experience, purchased dearly, and, I hope, I now have done so.

Reduced at last to live on my half pay, and debarred my accustomed pleasures, thought entered, and I attended to its salutary truths. Often I sighed for the dear companion of my youth, and mourned her loss as irreparable. While I was in this state of mind, a Lady of great beauty, merit and fortune, dying, left me a legacy of a thousand pounds. Surprised at this event, vanity presented to my recollection many past marks of her having felt a preference for me above
all

all others. The same was whispered among those of my acquaintance, who had known her; but whether just or not, it is hardly possible to decide. My valet, who had married soon after the conclusion of the war, I had enabled to set up in a perfumer's-shop; he had acquired a small sum by his services, and I doubled it: But he soon, likewise, launched out into extravagance, broke his wife's heart, who was a worthy, prudent, industrious woman, and was obliged to shut up his shop. Soon after he crowned all, by committing a forgery in my name; but I was, providentially for my own peace, empowered to save him, and did not neglect that power. I received him again into my service, until he could obtain some other situation; but he absconded one evening when I was engaged abroad, taking with him the box containing my Jessy's jewels, this picture drawn for me on our first arrival in London, and many other things of value.

It

It was about that time I first beheld my Anna: My soul claimed her for its own, and the event justified the presentiment I then felt. Her youth was marked by a peculiar destiny, which, at some future time, I will unfold to you, as far as I know. At present her sad loss is too recent, the sense of her goodness and perfections too painful."

Sedmore, with a tributary sigh, concluded his narration, and it is high time that I resign my pen.

IPHIGENIA.

LETTER XVII.

OPPRESSED by the heavy sense of my unhappy situation, the contents of my purse nearly exhausted, and the torturing apprehension of being thrown dependant on the worthy Sedmore's bounteous heart, ever present before me, the late lapse of time has been most painfully tedious.

In vain have I assiduously applied myself in search of some humane family, or individual, where the exertion of my humble talents, and cheerful labours, might secure the blessing of a safe and honorable asylum from the evils I dread; all my efforts are hitherto unsuccessful, and the weight of sorrow and disappointment dwells deeply on my mind.

The

The society of Sedmore, pleasing and valuable as he is, becomes irksome: I am perplexed, silent, and sad, when with him. The indelicacy and horror of my situation, strikes me with additional force every time I revolve it, and the generous and feeling heart of Sedmore seems to enter into, and sympathize with my every cause of disquiet.

The family described in my two last letters, and who are so happily emancipated from their distresses, have this day bade adieu to us and London. We have been their frequent visitors lately, and each interview convinced us more fully of their worth, and enhanced their value in our eyes. They repaid Sedmore with a gratitude I never saw exceeded; not with that pride which scorns the sense of obligation, but with that honest humble joy, which delights in the power of expressing its just sense of services, by actions as well as words, and seems to feel a pleasure rather than debasement, in acknowledging
itself

itself indebted to a virtuous heart. Our parting with these deserving people was marked by tears of regret: The amiable Sally wept aloud, and the good old couple were not less affected: The younger children likewise shewed a lively concern, and the scene was more moving than I was prepared to encounter. They pressed us to visit the peaceful and retired spot, where Providence had opened for them a home, which they trusted would be comfortable, and given a sufficiency equal to their wants, and above their expectations. A secret wish crossed my mind, that I could, with propriety, accept the sincere and ardent invitation; but they knew not my embarrassing state, nor could guess the agony that wrung my heart. Sedmore, in consequence of his former determinations, not to be known to them, gave them an assumed name, with an address to a coffee-house, where he knew any letters would reach him with security; and, promising to correspond with the parents, I assured Sally of my regularly supporting a
similar

similar interchange of sentiments with her, by the address of Sedmore, whom they still believe my brother, and the name they know us by is that of Waldon.

The ungrateful and treacherous servant of Sedmore failed to call, as that most humane and exalted of men expected: He has likewise disappeared from his lodgings, and no intelligence can be obtained of him. — Sedmore is concerned at this event: He hoped to reclaim him, but, I fear, he is too far gone in vice to listen with any effect to the mild and eloquent voice of forgiveness, compassion, and salutary counsel. The work of sincere reformation must be left to him, to whom all things are possible, and who alone can work a change of heart, and consequently of life and manners, on the most hardened profligate.

Adieu! dearest sister of my soul; I anxiously expect letters from you; and to pour
out

out my sentiments thus, constitutes the highest earthly comfort of

Your

IPHIGENIA.

LETTER XVIII.

FORTUNE begins to wear a milder aspect : I have obtained an employment at once agreeable and advantageous, to attend daily for a few hours on the daughters of two families of distinction from France, and instruct them in music, drawing, painting, geography, and the English language. I find this really a pleasing task, and my services are rewarded not only by a genteel pecuniary consideration, but by the favor and distinction of some very amiable characters : I have still many leisure hours to beguile with.

with Sedmore, who cheats my heart of many a pang by his converse ; and I still continue his adopted sister, and assume his name ; an unimportant consideration with me, to whom all names are equal, since denied the knowledge of my own. By my pupils, and their parents, I frequently hear my French connections named. M. D'Aveneux and Lady were well known to them ; the latter is, I find, dead, and the former, as may well be imagined, not inconsolable on that account. Mr. Arlingcourt is, likewise, often the subject of their discourse, and they ascribe to him the meritæ he possesses. Once too I heard them name your cousin, in terms that made my weak heart tremble and glow. The varying colour on my cheek might have revealed my emotion, but was not observed. They spoke of him with warm applause, lavished encomiums on his person, his manners, and his character ; but added, his attachment to the orphan girl in England was greatly to be regretted, as to that was to be ascribed the cloud of melancholy that suppressed

pressed his native vivacity, and overspread his features. I felt myself so extremely affected, that I have seldom experienced a more welcome release, than when I arose to retire.

Adieu! the evening is uncommonly beautiful, and Sedmore summons me to accompany him in a walk, through some pleasing and rural scenes, in the vicinity of our neighbourhood.

I leave this packet to close, until I find it expedient to dispatch it to the hand that will undertake to convey it to yours.

IN CONTINUATION.

A most afflictive event again overwhelms me! How fallacious are the views of poor weak mortals! How unable are we to call the next moment our own! Invited by the fineness of the weather, a soft and soothing languor stole over my senses, a pleasing hope possessed my mind. We rambled, wrapped

in tender reflections, diversified by consoling observations, and cheered by some rising thoughts, around the adjacent fields, and Sedmore promised to trace the early vicissitudes of his Anna, when two ruffians suddenly seized him, and forced him rudely away. How shall I describe my horror, my distress ! I shrieked, I would have held him, and when torn from me, I ran, or rather flew after him. He besought me to be composed, to remember myself, held his own hard fate lightly ; but enforced the necessity of fortitude, and dropping a tear on my hand, assured me, with a look of sympathetic gentleness, that the evil was not so great as I imagined, and, calling me his sister, added, I should hear from him in a few hours. My tongue was silent, my eyes dry ; but my heart wept tears of anguish. To behold my only friend, my only comforter and adviser, thus snatched from me, judge of my feelings ! They are not to be described by words ! I stood gazing after him several minutes, in all the agony of silent grief : In losing him, I
saw

myself deprived of my only present good, and my sorrow would not be argued down. I walked sadly home, and the next morning brought me a few lines from my lamented Sedmore. Some busy tongue whispered he was again in London (whence his clamorous creditors vanished him, when he was compelled to leave his Anna) and some unpitying heart has lodged him in the King's-Bench prison, from whence, I fear, there is scarce a hope of his being speedily emancipated, as the nobleness of his heart has branded him unjustly with the name of prodigal, and, instead of securing to him friends, has (strange and contradictory as it may appear) from the base ingratitude of some, and the grovelling illiberality of sentiment in others, made him many enemies.

“ I have,” said he, one day, in mentioning the occurrences of his past life, “ I own I have often trespassed against worldly wisdom, against self-interest, and done things that prudence cannot justify; and so have the
most

most perfect human characters, dearest Isabella." This rigid virtue ought not to be disregarded, for, from the contempt of it, a hideous brood of evils generally arise ; but shall we deny that there may be other and superior virtues unconnected with that ? Great and lovely qualities glowing in the bosom where prudence, or at least œconomy, seldom, perhaps never, enters ; but which, from that deficiency alone, lies hid under a load of ignominy. This reflection ought surely to teach us to nourish a quality, without the active use of which the highest endowments, and human perfections, may become despicable. It inspired me with fortitude to pursue my daily avocation, and obey the friendly counsel of Sedmore in so doing : I therefore assumed an air of tolerable composure, attended my pupils, and, contrary to Sedmore's injunction, I then visited his dreary recess. It was the first time my feet had ever entered a prison. A cold tremor shook my frame. Scarcely could I support myself to him ; but his state was not so comfortless as I had

pourtrayed, yet it was bad. Our meeting was such as you will imagine. Sedmore was shocked!—"Your character!—your reputation will suffer!—generous girl!" he exclaimed—"You know not what you do; the artless innocence of your own heart renders you unsuspicious of the depravity of others: It may be discovered you are not my sister: Here you are exposed to vulgar eyes, and you are undone, if known. Oh! you know not mankind, and its illiberal prejudices, as I do. Come no more, dear, valued Iphigenia; I would not for worlds have your spotless virtue the sport of fools; those that know me, know I have no sister: You are on the brink of a fearful precipice; but come no more."

"Unkind Sedmore! you shall be obeyed," I replied. I arose, and he pressed his cheek to my hand, saying, "Call me not unkind; think me not ungrateful: I would sacrifice my life to see you happy; but remember, oh! remember yourself."

"I

"I have, I will," I exclaimed, in tears :
"I have exerted myself this day beyond
what I thought in my power ; I have at-
tended to my employment with firmness that
amazed myself !"

"Heaven be praised !" Sedmore whis-
pered ; "I shall, I trust, continue to do so,"
I added ; "but to be denied to offer com-
fort to him, who has so generously consoled
me, strikes deeply !"

"We will interchange our sentiments on
paper," said Sedmore, "and daily."

"Be it then so," I returned. I feared
this deserving, unfortunate being might really
be in want : It shocked my heart ; yet to
shock the niceness of his feelings I was inca-
pable : I therefore said not a word on this
distressing subject, though it dwelt deeply on
my mind ; but bidding him adieu, I hastened
home, and now repeat the adieu, with added

M 2

warmth

warmth of friendly affection, to my beloved Isabella.

IPHIGENIA.

L E T T E R X I X.

I HAVE this moment received an account, that the person, to whose care I purpose to intrust these letters, expects momentarily to embark, and begs I will not delay to forward my packet to him another moment; but before I seal it, I transcribe, for your perusal, the inclosed copies of what I have this morning received from Sedmore, who, from their contents, must now be immersed in the deepest affliction.

TO IPHIGENIA.

“ My amiable sister will, I am assured, feel for the distress occasioned by the inclosed letter,

letter, which was this morning brought me by an unknown hand, and which you will readily believe occasions in my heart feelings more painfully acute than any I ever yet experienced. Read, and judge; unite with me in prayers to heaven for that fortitude now so essential to us both.

SEDMORE."

Copy of the Letter inclosed in the foregoing.

" TO MR. SEDMORE.

Delude not another to ruin! Join not your guilty soul with innocence! Forbear to contaminate the purity of Iphigenia Monteville! Your love and artifice are both known! Know you likewise, that your former wife was the natural daughter of your father, whose fatal vices are justly visited on you his offspring! But spread their direful influence no farther; for his offences the wretched

M 3

Anna

Anna suffered, and your Honor is polluted ! through her polluted ! For she too fell the slave of infamy ! the wife of her brother ! She died the victim of shame ! the martyr of broken marriage vows ! Her disgrace communicates itself to you, and recoils upon the head of him, the author of both your beings and misfortunes ; whose destructive wiles, and perjured faith, are thus awfully and signally punished ; and the woes of ruined virtue, of injured innocence, of despised love, thus avenged by the Providence of him, who is the just Redresser of wrong !”

SEDMORE.

IN CONTINUATION.

“ Judge, generous, lovely, compassionate, Iphigenia, of the effect these dreadful lines have produced in my mind : I cannot delineate, but you may, perhaps, imagine it. Horror and grief distracts me ! Shame rends my heart-strings ! Have I been the husband
of

of my sister? Was that adored Anna, every way the victim of dishonor, the partner of an intercourse, marked by circumstances of such peculiar misery? Did she, too, falsify the holy marriage bond? Did she fall the sacrifice of that crime? Know you aught of this, Iphigenia? I now recollect particulars that almost convince me that you do; but so distressed is my soul, so deranged my intellects, that I scarcely know what to think, nor how to determine. In every situation, though branded with guilt, in which my will had no share, though marked by unmerited ignominy and disgrace, your heart will, I know, feel for the sharp sorrows of him, who, amidst every vicissitude, every woe that fate or malice can inflict, will remain, through life, with all the purity of a brother's affection,

Your sincerely devoted,

and disinterested,

SEDMORE."

IPHIGENIA

T O

ISABELLA,

IN CONTINUATION.

I have written to Sedmore, and endeavored to extract the poisoned arrow from his wounded heart. May heaven assist my wishes, and enable me to persuade him, that the afflicting letter is solely the effect of malice : In a great measure I believe it so ; that detested passion alone could impel the writer to reveal so torturing a truth, if truth it is, the heart of cruelest depravity alone could suggest so horrid a discovery, to what purpose can it be made, but merely to wound ? to wound, and fatally, a noble heart, susceptible of the nicest sensations, and hurt by the slightest touch, even by the breath of dishonor. Sedmore's affliction, which I could well imagine, urges me to repeat my visit ; but I have not yet put my design in practice, and

and I know it will but grieve him, if I do ; yet I feel an impulse almost unconquerable, and am undetermined to yield to it or not.

At all events I will be faithful to the sacred trust of Anna. I will labour to pluck out the arrow transfixed in her worthy husband's heart, gently to sooth his sorrow, and speak peace to his fears. The ashes of that dear, injured, unfortunate woman, shall never be disturbed by my imprudence, nor her guiltless woes published. Who can be the vile author of that alarming scroll ? Lord Danbury, and that wretched woman, the tool of his vice, first started up in my mind ; but, assuredly, prudence would teach them more caution, and their fears whisper silence ; yet who else could know the circumstance, alas ! too true, of Anna's fatal disgrace ? Would they were punished by any hand but Sedmore's, through any means but mine : I value him too highly to be the voluntary means of involving him in danger, of placing his misfortunes, and Anna's mournful fate, with

with him past doubt, of being the certain destroyer of every hope of his peace or comfort here ; or, perhaps, the instrument of miserably cutting off that life, which may yet, by the mercy of heaven, be an ornament and blessing to the world. In vain have I carefully examined the character of the letter : I can trace no similitude in it to any I have ever seen, and am bewildered in perplexity, and absorbed in sympathetic concern for the worthy being who has been to me indeed a brother, by a stronger tie than consanguinity is always found to be, the claims of generous commiseration, which the unaffectedly humane, and none but such, feel for the afflictions of a fellow-being ; that Sedmore has evinced for me, and my heart must be, indeed, depraved, if gratitude did not, in the present case, influence my feelings, with regard to him.

Another moment of delay may prevent the conveyance of these letters, by the person I rely on to deliver them to you ; therefore,

fore, dear partner of my every thought, whom I have always found above the narrow prejudices that sway the bulk of mankind, whose condescending goodness toward me exceeds, in my estimation, any acknowledgment that words can convey, accept the gratitude, sincere affection, and friendly wishes, of

Your unalterably attached,

IPHIGENIA.

L E T T E R XX.

HENRY SEDMORE, ESQ.

T O

MISS ISABELLA ADMAN.

IT is now near three months, Madam, since Miss Monterville dispatched a packet for you to India; since then, till within these few last days, your incomparable friend has
affiduouſly

assiduously applied herself to the laudable pursuits of cheerful industry, and appropriated many an hour to sooth my misfortunes (of the nature of which I suppose you not wholly ignorant) even at the risque of incurring the censure of a malicious world, and, contrary to my constant intreaties and remonstrances, not to hazard blame, through a generous consideration of me ; but her exalted mind despised the caution which inferior characters rigidly observe : Conscious of innate rectitude she rested secure, my soul required the soothing consolation of a gentle being, a compassionate friend, and in her I found it ; nor will I conceal, although a glow of sorrow, not of pride, burns on my cheek, while I trace the truth, that to the produce of her labours have I been lately indebted for the support of life through a severe and dangerous illness, when Iphigenia contributed to the prolongation of my existence, and in a manner so delicate, so singular, as added ten-fold value to the benefit. With what anxiety did this lovely creature watch the progress of my disorder,

order, and with what grateful joy beheld me slowly recover! The bloom of virtuous pleasure, of uncommon goodness, adorned with added tint her beauteous features; thankfulness to Him, whose mercy had restored me, beamed in her eyes, and diffused a ray of content, and cheerful gratitude through my heart, that irradiated even the melancholy gloom of a prison! But these peaceful moments were of short duration. Last week elapsed without my once seeing or hearing from Iphigenia; it wasted with me in tedious lassitude. I began to be alarmed ere its conclusion; but waited in anxious hope till the first morning of this week brought with it added fears, and I dispatched a messenger to my fair friend.

He soon returned; but, ah! with what heart-rending news! My sister, for such Iphigenia is believed to be where she resides, was confined to her bed in a delirious fever, and every moment expected to be her last! You, Madam, may (no other can) imagine

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N

my

my severe distress, that next day I found means, attended by an officer, to visit her. The mistress of the house professed herself ignorant of my residence, or should have given me earlier information. This I knew to be true, and inquired if any cause could be assigned for this sudden and dreadful attack.

“Ah! yes, Sir,” replied the woman, taking a news-paper out of a drawer, here is the cause. I sent Miss in the paper to read one morning, and in a moment we heard something fall in her room, and preceded by a loud shriek. We ran into the room, and the poor young Lady lay on the floor in a dead fit! At first we thought she was gone for ever; but she soon shewed signs of life, and continued all that day out of one fit into another. At night the fever came on, in the manner you see. The gentry she attends have been very good, and sent every day since they heard of her illness, and are greatly concerned.” I was impatient to see the
contents

of the fatal paper. The woman gave it into my hand, as she concluded speaking; and your distress, Madam, will not, I fear, be much inferior to that of our amiable Iphigenia, when you peruse the afflicting article, the cause of our present sorrow, which, with trembling heart and hand, I here transcribe.

“ We are credibly informed, by a correspondent at Paris, that the only son of the Hon. Mr. Worthington, of Arran-Vale, presumptive heir to the earldom and estates of Selby, was found murdered in his apartments in that city a few days ago; various are the conjectures on this melancholy subject. Some imagine that this horrid deed was committed by himself, and occasioned by the violent effects of an unfortunate passion; but the most rational conclusion appears to be, that the perpetrator was his own servant, who is disappeared with considerable property, known to have been in his master’s possession.”

How am I enabled to trace this mournful intelligence? Or how will you, affectionate

and sympathetic friend of all the suffering parties, support a blow so deadly? Believe me, Madam, it is with infinite and most painful reluctance, that I undertake a task so melancholy.

The physician that attends our dear Iphigenia gives hopes of her recovery. May the Best of Beings realize them! Would to heaven I could attend her couch; but that comfort is denied me: Till now I was not so keenly sensible of my present misfortunes, nor so heavily oppressed by the loss of liberty.

Affure yourself, Madam, that I shall embrace the earliest opportunity of transmitting to you the event of your fair friend's present situation, for the favorable issue of which none can be more truly anxious than,

Madam,

Your sincerely devoted,

H. SEDMORE.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.